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See memo Rpt
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CREATION OF ALLIED FORCE

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On August 14th, 1942, I received a directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff. It stated that the President and the Prime Minister had decided that combined military operations be directed against AFRICA as early as practicable, with a view to gaining, in conjunction with the Allied Forces in the MIDDLE EAST, complete control of NORTH AFRICA, from the Atlantic to the Red Sea.

It appointed me Commander-in-Chief, Allied Expeditionary Force, stated that I was to undertake the operations outlined in the directive, and defined the scope of my command and responsibilities.

This directive officially confirmed an assignment upon which I had in fact been engaged since late July, following talks in LONDON between the United States and British Chiefs of Staff. In early August American officers, drawn from the planning staff of ETOUSA joined up with a small group of British Staff planners who had been at work since July 18th. Headquarters were established at Norfolk House, St. James' Square. On August 10th Major General (now Lieutenant General) Mark W. Clark was tentatively appointed Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and was placed in direct charge of all planning. Brigadier General (now Lieutenant General) Walter B. Smith was appointed my Chief of Staff.

The shape and scope of Allied Force Headquarters developed naturally from the fact that the Commander-in-Chief was American, that the operation it was planning would in its nature be amphibious throughout, that Air would play a vital part both in the operation itself, and in the exploitation of its success, and finally that the forces employed would be drawn from all three services of both the United States and the United Kingdom.

I was determined from the first, to do all in my power to make this a truly Allied Force, with real unity of command and centralization of administrative responsibility. Alliances in the past have often done no more than to name the common foe, and "unity of command" has been a pious aspiration thinly disguising the national jealousies, ambitions and recriminations of high ranking officers, unwilling to subordinate themselves or their forces to a commander of different nationality or different service.

Apart from my personal inclinations, the difficulties and complexities of the proposed operation were such that anything less than complete integration of effort would spell certain disaster. I was heartened by the knowledge that I had the full backing of both American and British Chiefs of Staff in the matter. As an instance, the British immediately agreed to my request that the directive appointing Lieutenant General K.A.N. (now Sir Kenneth A.N.) Anderson to the Command of the British ground forces involved, should be amended to limit his right of appeal to the War Office to occasions of the gravest emergency, and then only after giving me his reasons for doing so. Again, I was able to write to the Chief of Staff of the Army of the United States, General George C. Marshall: "It is my belief, that the British desire to place in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, the maximum degree of exclusive authority and responsibility that is feasible in an operation involving troops of two nationalities. I hope this trend will be encouraged on both sides of the Atlantic so that real and complete integration may be possible." He replied: "Your requests will be fulfilled to the maximum of our capabilities. It is the desire of the War Department that you as

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Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces should have the maximum feasible degree of authority and responsibility, and that you should operate at all times under as broad a directive as possible."

From everybody concerned I received the most loyal and cordial cooperation in carrying this conception of my duties into effect.

Admiral Sir Andrew B. Cunningham, Bart., was appointed Naval Commander-in-Chief. By the terms of his appointment he was responsible to the Allied Commander-in-Chief for the security of the sea communications of the expedition, and for the support of the army in further amphibious operations in the Western Mediterranean, and in the seaward defense of that coast and its ports. He was directly responsible to the British Admiralty, on the other hand, for the British Naval Forces in the Western Mediterranean and North Atlantic that were being used for other purposes than African operations.

The American Air Forces assigned to the expedition were under the command of Brigadier General James H. Doolittle, and the British were under the command of Air Marshal Sir William L. Welsh, both being directly responsible to me. To coordinate all air planning, and to advise me on air matters, Air Commodore A.P.M. Saunders was appointed Air Officer at Allied Force Headquarters.

The principle of complete integration was applied throughout the General Staff Sections of Allied Force Headquarters (A.F.H.Q.). As far as practicable, the best man was assigned to each job, irrespective of nationality. In the Administrative and Maintenance sections, however, it was essential to accept the fact that national logistical systems are well established products of national experience. They are based upon national regulations and, in some cases upon national laws which frequently cannot easily be altered, even when it be desirable to alter them. Thus, in these sections, it was my principal concern to insure that no international facade should be built, which would prejudice the administration and maintenance of the armies upon which the success of my operations would depend. It is logistics which control all campaigns and limit many. This general statement was never more applicable to any campaign than it was to the North African operations.

Amongst the important and far reaching decisions taken by me during this campaign were those which concerned the administrative side of the organization of my headquarters. There was no historical precedent upon which to base them. A close theoretical study of all the problems involved was undertaken during the planning period in LONDON, and a plan was prepared upon which I built up my organization. Experience has proved conclusively that the plan was sound, and no essential alterations to it have been made or found necessary.

The administrative systems of both nations were preserved, essentially undisturbed; but for purposes of liaison at all levels and for purposes of decision they were coordinated in the heads of the two principal Staff Sections concerned, which, though dual in the sense that there was in each, an American and a British Assistant Chief of Staff, were single in the sense that no divided counsel or divergent decision ever emanated from them. As a final safeguard, and in order to insure the fullest use of common stocks, I appointed Major General H. M. (now Lieutenant General Sir Humfrey) Gale as Chief Administrative Officer—a post unique in the history of war.

We applied the same principle of organization to solve the immensely difficult problem of movement, which constantly confronted my logistical staff. Without disturbing the individual character of

either country's organization, we coordinated their functions by the creation of a combined Movement and Transportation Section, where the British and American chiefs worked in intimate collaboration. Under the general direction of the Chief Administrative Officer, this combination functioned in complete harmony, and performed their complex duties in a manner which I cannot too highly praise. The success of their efforts is amply attested by the general record of the North African Campaign and by the special achievements that are referred to in the later pages of this dispatch.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

My original directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff envisaged the attainment of our ultimate objective in three stages: first, the establishment of firm and mutually supported lodgments in the area of ORAN, ALGIERS, and TUNIS, on the North Coast, and of CASABLANCA on the West Coast; second, the use of those lodgments as bases to acquire complete control over all French NORTH AFRICA, and, if necessary, SPANISH MOROCCO; third, a thrust Eastwards through the LIBYAN desert, to take the Axis forces in the Western desert in the rear and annihilate them. Because of strict limitations in shipping and in naval support, including carriers, the latter two objectives were recognized in all discussions as possibly beyond the realm of practicability on a long term basis. The Prime Minister's frequent comment was, "Well, if the enemy rushes into TUNISIA, where he can probably forestall us if he so determines, where is a better place to kill Germans?" It was our plan, that at the same time that our objectives were being attained in North Africa air and sea operations were to be intensified against Axis installations. The aim was thus to insure communications through the Mediterranean, and to facilitate operations at a later date against the Axis on the European continent.

It was not intended that TUNIS should be captured in the initial assault. All the earlier campaigns of the war underlined the grave hazard of attempting to sail convoys into "bomb alley"--a very aptly named part of the Mediterranean which was dominated by the Axis air forces that were based on SICILY and SARDINIA. It would, moreover, be beyond the shipping and other resources available to us to include TUNIS in an initial assault.

The strategic problem that faced us was greatly complicated by political considerations outside the scope of strictly military planning. The reactions of the neutral countries of SPAIN, VICHY FRANCE, and FRENCH NORTH AFRICA itself were clearly to have a vital bearing upon the course of our endeavors, and were also perhaps to determine the nature of the enemy's counter-blows.

There was a lively danger that the Germans would strike through SPAIN at our vital line of communication through the STRAITS of GIBRALTAR. SPAIN was herself pro-Axis. She was a main center for Axis Intelligence activity, and there was more than a strong suspicion that urgently needed materiel was finding its way Northward across the PYRENEES. SPAIN was certainly making available to the Germans RADAR stations on both sides of the STRAITS, the Southern shore of which was in Spanish hands. The British and American Ambassadors had assured General Franco of our intention to respect SPAIN's rights and sovereignty, and there were indications that the chief anxiety of the Spanish leader was to maintain neutrality, for economic reasons. But it might well be that Axis pressure would prove too strong.

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It was to guard against such a possibility as this that the Combined Chiefs of Staff deemed it essential to capture CASABLANCA in the initial stages as an opening for an auxiliary line of communications, and decided that considerable forces should be held in readiness to seize SPANISH MOROCCO and hold it against a German onslaught.

It could be regarded as certain that the Axis would immediately occupy the whole of FRANCE and that their aim in doing this would be to forestall a landing by us on the coast of the MIDI, to establish air and submarine bases along the French Mediterranean Coast, and above all, to attempt to gain control of the French Fleet in TOULON. "What about the French Fleet?" was to bring an echo in British hearts of the catastrophic, anxious days of June 1940. We had to prepare, and with the greatest reluctance, to provide, if necessary, the same answer as had been given on that sorry occasion.

It seemed probable that the enemy would do all in his power to retain control of the SICILIAN CHANNEL by seizing TUNIS and BIZERTE before we could reach them. Our ability to get there first would depend upon three things: upon the distance between these two towns and our most Easterly lodgement; upon the strength of the forces that we could make sufficiently mobile to act offensively over a considerable distance; and upon the resistance, or lack of resistance, that was offered by the French to the respective invasions.

The whole question of probable French reaction to our enterprise was extremely complex, in spite of the effective exploratory work by Mr. Robert D. Murphy and other members of the American Consular Service. It was known that German propaganda had used the incidents of MERS EL KEBIR, DAKAR, SYRIA, and MADAGASCAR to inflame French opinion against the British, who were accused of treacherous imperialism at the expense of FRANCE. America, on the other hand, had escaped this opprobrium. The diplomatic and trade contacts which she had maintained with Vichy were some slight solace to a people steeped in the despair and bitterness of defeat, clinging with pathetic loyalty to Pétain, the self-appointed symbol of the Spirit of France.

It had therefore been decided that the expedition should appear to be predominantly American, and that the necessary contribution of the British services should be played down, at least in the initial stages. The assaults were to be all-American, and no British troops were to land for at least a week, in order to allow time for President Roosevelt to negotiate with the French.

NORTH AFRICA had never been occupied by the Axis, and there was lacking in the land, therefore, that spur to hatred of the Boche which Metropolitan FRANCE had felt all too keenly. But the activities of the Axis Armistice Commissions, which were steadily depriving the population of everything except the barest necessities of life, and also stripping the armed services of the greater part of their equipment, were beginning to stir true Frenchmen from their apathy; if loyalties and emotions were still confused, there was reason to hope that resistance to us would be no more than a gesture to the Gallic sense of honor, and that resistance to the Axis would materialize in an effort of the French to retain the shadow of their Liberty.

Whether the French greeted us as liberators, or resisted our violation of their neutrality, it was clearly imperative that we should make an impressive display of strength; half measures would fail to inspire confidence on the one hand, or would encourage resistance on the other. Moreover, there was a greater chance of SPAIN maintaining her neutrality if she knew that strong forces were at hand

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to counter any sign of hostility. The strength and direction of enemy reaction could only be determined in the event, but the stakes were so high that it might be expected to be considerable.

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Thus the strategic conception of sweeping the Axis from NORTH AFRICA, and establishing Allied control from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, necessitated an operation on a scale of such magnitude that, once initiated, it would have to be followed through with all the forces and shipping that the situation demanded. It would be the major Allied operation of 1942 and 1943, a substitute for an expedition across the English Channel which had originally been planned, but which had been abandoned in June as strategically unsound at that stage of the war. More particularly, it would be the first major United States operation of the war against GERMANY. Anything approaching failure would have a most damaging effect upon the moral of all whose hopes had been buoyed by the entry of the United States into the war. It was clear that the seven divisions originally estimated by the Chiefs of Staff in June would be inadequate, and it was decided that an eventual build-up of at least ten or twelve divisions must be contemplated.

The pressing problem was, however, not eventual but immediate strength. In early plans in which the aim was to strike as near TUNIS as the enemy air threat would permit it was envisaged that there should be, in addition to three major assaults at CASABLANCA, ORAN and ALGIERS, two small scale assaults on PHILIPPEVILLE and BONE. But by August 13th, detailed examination of available resources made it clear that this program was too ambitious. One limiting factor was the original decision that only American troops should be used in the assaults. There were available only ten Regimental Combat Teams, two Armored Combat Commands, and a Ranger Battalion. Of these few had, as yet, received the requisite amphibious training.

An even more serious limiting factor was the shortage of naval escorts, combat loaders, landing craft, and trained crews. Both the United States and Royal Navies had cut to the bone on all other commitments; it was even agreed that the shipping used in convoys to RUSSIA should, at the appropriate time, be diverted to the African operation. There was no hope of "borrowing" from the Pacific Fleet, so that the American contribution at sea could involve no more than the ships which were already in the Atlantic or building.

In the light of these limitations our strategy had to be reconsidered. Two alternative plans were suggested. The first was to thrust eastwards into the Mediterranean as planned, and to hope that the threat from SPAIN would either not materialize or not have time to develop before CASABLANCA had been seized by a force advancing overland from ORAN; in the initial stages we should have to rely upon a heavy concentration of aircraft to keep open the Straits. This plan, it was estimated, would give us a reasonable chance of gaining the TUNIS prize, but would obviously leave our line of communication dangerously insecure. Eventually its only difference from the original plan was the omission of the CASABLANCA attack, with the intention of working hard toward that port from the ORAN region. It was admittedly risky. I personally favored taking the chances implicit in the plan.

The second plan was to confine the assaults to ORAN and CASABLANCA, thus securing a firm base from which eventually to move Eastwards. This plan, it was believed, would have the merit of avoiding undue risks, would remove the direct threat to America of an Axis occupation of FRENCH WEST AFRICA, and would bring American ground forces into early action. But it would rule out any possibility of our seizing TUNIS before the enemy, and with it, the chance of our achieving any really important offensive objective. Moreover, the omission of ALGIERS from

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the initial assaults would be politically as well as militarily unfortunate; not only was it considered the "soft spot" from a military point of view, but its capture was calculated to have a greater effect upon the inhabitants of NORTH AFRICA than the capture of any other city.

There was another great disadvantage in committing half the force to an attack upon the Atlantic seaboard. Conditions for landing were estimated to be unfavorable four days out of five during the late autumn. There was thus the strong possibility that our armada would find itself waiting the weather, having lost the immense advantage of surprise and giving the Axis precious days to make its counterstrokes.

Both plans were exhaustively examined and both were considered unsatisfactory. On September 6th a final decision was made that aimed at avoiding the risks of the first alternative, but without giving up hope of gaining TUNIS quickly provided we were favored by good fortune. However, the primary and basic purpose of the expedition remained always the same: to lodge ourselves securely in Northwest Africa. In late planning whenever scarcity of resources brought into conflict the necessity for obtaining the Northwestern ports surely and quickly, and the great desirability of carrying along troops and equipment suited to long, overland fighting, the latter invariably had to give way. It was decided that the assaults on PHILIPPEVILLE and BONE should be abandoned; combat loaders with a lift of 5,000 men were to be transferred from both the originally proposed CASABLANCA and ORAN forces to form the nucleus of an ALGIERS force; and the remainder of that force was to be made up by British troops. The political desirability of an all-American assault, though still valid, was outweighed by the necessities of sound strategy.

P L A N S

By the terms of my directive, the date on which the initial assaults were to be launched was to be determined by me. The earlier it could be, the better, both on broad political and strategic grounds, and because of probable deterioration in weather conditions, both in the Atlantic and in the mountain passes of ALGERIA and TUNISIA. The vital need for tactical surprise pointed to a choice of a new-moon period. The final decision to attack on November 8th was not taken until the middle of September. Previous attempts to anticipate the date by three weeks, or a month, had been frustrated by the time needed to assemble and to fit out the necessary shipping, to train the assault troops and landing craft crews in amphibious operations, and to complete the equipment of the American forces in the United Kingdom.

Taking into account all these considerations and decisions, the Outline Plan was issued on September 20th.

Planning for the Western Task Force, which was to sail direct from the United States to capture CASABLANCA, had necessarily to be carried out in WASHINGTON. Its commander, Major General (now Lieutenant General) George S. Patton, Jr., paid a brief visit to LONDON for coordination. The assault force of five Regimental Combat Teams, 1 Armored Combat Command and one Armored Combat Team, were to be transported in twelve combat loaders, ten auxiliary combat loaders, six cargo ships, and one sea train.

The Center Task Force, under the command of Major General Lloyd R. Fredendall, whose primary mission was to capture ORAN, was to be composed of the 16th, 18th and 26th Regimental Combat Teams, a Combat Command from the 1st Armored Division, and the 1st Ranger Battalion, all of which were to be transported from the United Kingdom in thirteen Infantry landing ships, seven personnel ships, three transport ships, one gun landing ship, and twenty-three motor transport trucks.

After accomplishing their initial missions, the Western and Center Task Forces were to establish and to maintain communications between CASABLANCA and ORAN; and to build up land and air striking forces ready to occupy SPANISH MOROCCO, if this should be necessary.

The Eastern Task Force was charged, in the first place, with seizing ALGIERS and the airfields at BLIDA and MAISON BLANCHE. The assault force was to consist of the 39th and 168th Regimental Combat Teams, the British 11th and 36th Brigade Groups, and the 1st and 6th Commandos, composed of both British and American troops. It was to be transported from the United Kingdom in ten Infantry assault ships or combat loaders, four personnel ships, two cargo vessels, two landing ship carriers (derrick hoisting), and sixteen motor transport ships. To establish the impression that the whole enterprise was American, it was to be commanded by Major General Charles W. Ryder, Army of the United States, and was to be during the assault phase directly under my orders. At a suitable time the units concerned were to pass to the command of Lieutenant General K.A.N. Anderson, General Officer Commanding the British First Army, who was to thrust Eastwards to capture the airfield at DJIDJELLI and the port of BOUGIE, and ultimately to advance into TUNISIA. As the method of accomplishing this was to depend upon whether or not the French resisted, alternative plans were made to facilitate the achievement of the ends that we had in view.

The assaults on ALGIERS and ORAN were to take place simultaneously at an hour to be decided by me. While it was hoped that the timing of the assault on CASABLANCA would coincide with those on ALGIERS and ORAN, it was recognized that differences in weather conditions might make this impossible. Accordingly, it was arranged that the decision with regards to the assault on CASABLANCA was to be left to General Patton.

To the two Navies fell the vast and complex task of escorting the various convoys to their destinations, protecting them from possible intervention by hostile surface ships and submarines, and giving direct fire support to the assaulting forces; initial air support, too, was to be given from Aircraft Carriers until landing grounds had been captured and the air forces had been established ashore.

The United States Navy was to be responsible for carrying out these duties in support of the Western Task Force; and the Royal Navy was to be responsible in a similar way with respect to the operations inside the Mediterranean. Naval Command of the Western Task Force was assigned to Rear Admiral (now Vice Admiral) Henry K. Hewitt, who had his flag on the cruiser AUGUSTA. The battleship MASSACHUSETTS, two cruisers, and five destroyers were to form the covering group; the battleships TEXAS and NEW YORK, three cruisers, and twenty destroyers were to be the fire group and anti-submarine escort; and the Aircraft Carrier RANGER, three auxiliary carriers, an anti-aircraft cruiser and nine destroyers were to constitute the Aircraft Carrier group. Eight minesweepers and four submarines were to complete this formidable force.

To keep watch and ward over the Italian and Vichy French fleets, the Royal Navy planned to have in readiness a strong force, called Force "H" which was to consist of the battleships DUKE OF YORK and RENOWN and RODNEY, the aircraft carriers VICTORIOUS and FORMIDABLE, four cruisers, and fifteen destroyers; three submarines were to patrol off TOULON, five off the STRAITS of MESSINA, and as many as were available along a line running Northwest from TRAPANI in SICILY. To guard the Western approaches to the STRAITS of GIBRALTAR, a force of two cruisers and three destroyers was to patrol off the AZORES.

Escort for the Center Task Force was to be provided by one convoy destroyer, eight fleet minesweepers, two sloops, six corvettes, and two cutters. Also, fire support was to be provided by the battleship RODNEY, temporarily detached from Force "H", and by two cruisers, two anti-aircraft ships, twelve destroyers and two auxiliary carriers. The aircraft carrier FURIOUS and two auxiliary aircraft carriers were to provide air support.

To the Eastern Task Force, we assigned our convoy destroyer, seven fleet minesweepers, three sloops, and seven corvettes as escort, four cruisers, three auxiliary anti-aircraft ships, one monitor, and twelve destroyers as fire support, and the Aircraft Carrier ARGUS and one auxiliary aircraft carrier as air support. To each Task Force was assigned a flotilla of eight minesweepers to clear the ports at the earliest opportunity.

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The passage of such an abnormal number of ships through the STRAITS could not be hidden from the enemy. But in an attempt to deceive him as to their destination, it was planned that at dusk the night before the landings, every ship was to be steaming along the line of advance to MALTA. The hazardous and costly efforts in the past to run convoys to that heroic island was thus to pay a rich dividend indeed if the enemy could be persuaded that this was such another on a grand scale.

To bring this great concourse of shipping to its appointed tasks on time, after the vessels had refuelled in the narrow waters of GIBRALTAR and after they had played a part in the deceptive advance towards MALTA, involved an intricacy of planning and coordination, an assumption of efficiency and seamanship unparalleled in the history of naval warfare.

Throughout the whole North African campaign we had in our plan of operations but one ultimate objective, our operations were to be under but one commander, and they were to be controlled by a staff of dual nationality. However, in the initial stages the ground forces concerned were to be divided into two distinct groups, both with regards to locality and objective, and with respect to nationality. After the landings, the Center Task Force was to turn Westwards to link up with the Western Task Force and was to form a single, wholly American Army, ready to meet the threat of a German attack through SPAIN. The Eastern Task Force on the other hand, was quickly to be transformed into the British First Army, and was to strike Eastwards toward TUNISIA.

It was decided to follow this natural line of demarcation even in respect to the Air Forces. The 12th U.S.A.A.F. was to form a Western Command, with headquarters at ORAN. Similarly the R.A.F. squadrons that were assigned to the operation were to form an Eastern Command, with headquarters at ALGIERS. With a view to the achievement of a maximum in flexibility in air power, to the reinforcement on occasion of each command from the other, and to necessary concentrations in strength in certain parts of the theater of operations, truly, all units in our operations were to be subject to my centralized direction and control.

Though the initial assaults were to be supported by seaborne aircraft, it was essential that the maximum possible strength of fighter aircraft should be available as soon as landing grounds had been seized. It was therefore planned to fly from GIBRALTAR 160 fighters to each of the ORAN and CASABLANCA areas, and 90 to the ALGIERS area within three days of the attack. Thereafter, the build-up was to reach, at the end of seven weeks, a total, in all types of aircraft, of 1,244 in the Western Command, and 454 in the Eastern Command.

These aircraft were to be responsible in providing air cover to shipping and to ground forces, and in protecting bases and communications against air attack; also, in conjunction with the naval forces, they were to protect convoys against attack by submarines or surface raiders; and, finally, they were to provide air cooperation and support for land operations subsequent to the assault phase.

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Once adequate bases had been secured, strategic air forces for the bombing of possible Axis installations in SPAIN, and, ultimately, in the rest of the Mediterranean area were to be built up. The rate at which this could be done was to be limited by the number of squadrons of suitable types which could be made available in the United States and in the United Kingdom. The R.A.F. was already heavily committed in other theaters of war, both in fighter and bomber strength, and it was clear from the outset, that United States air forces would have to be provided on a considerably larger scale than British.

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Throughout the planning stage, the scale of the initial assault, the speed of the subsequent build-up of the Allied Forces, and their essential maintenance needs were conditioned by shipping factors, such as the availability of assault craft and of shipping, the size and frequency of convoys, and the discharge capacity of the ports in North Africa. Such factors as these necessarily formed the framework round which the plan for the landing in NORTH AFRICA had to be built; and, from the outset, the most accurate assessment of logistical and transportation possibilities was a primary task of the planning staffs. Personnel, transport, and supplies for maintenance purposes had to be cut to or even below the barest essentials to retain the minimum necessary striking power and mobility for the assaulting forces.

Early in October, two new details of considerable importance were woven into the general plan. The first was a decision to employ a battalion of parachute infantry to be flown all the way from ENGLAND, to seize the airfields of TAFARAOUI and LA SENIA, South of ORAN. This entailed a flight of some twelve hours by the unarmed transport aircraft, which were then to be obliged to land only a short time after they had dropped their load of troops. The operation was to be carried out by the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry, in aircraft of the 60th Troop-Carrier Group.

Secondly there was woven into the general plan early in October a decision in favor of direct frontal attacks against the ports of ALGIERS and ORAN. In both cases the nearest main landings had to be a full day's march distant from the objective of the attack and it was feared that this delay might afford time for the blocking of these two vital ports, and the sabotaging of shipping and harbor installations. The Royal Navy, therefore, planned operations for forcing the entrance of both ports by two small warships, and at each undertook to break the boom, and to discharge military landing parties some 500 or 600 strong to secure the port intact.

P R E P A R A T I O N S

For the plans as finally approved, there were not in the United Kingdom sufficient forces, British or United States, available with the necessary amphibious training. Combined Operation Headquarters therefore arranged a program to afford in the short time available to the inexperienced formations with the assault ships and craft which could be spared, the best training possible. This training took place at the Combined Training Center in Western Scotland. A new United States Naval Base was rushed to completion in the same area, and several Regimental Combat Teams were put through a short course there. Furthermore, certain American combat teams were trained with Royal Naval Craft and crews and it was planned that these forces of the two lands were to operate together.

Amphibious training was inevitably handicapped by the necessity to overhaul and conserve the landing craft already in use, and to assemble and "work up" the large number of craft which continued to arrive from the United States until the last moment. Some crews, especially those that were assigned to the craft that arrive last from the United States, had to be quite hurriedly collected and trained. At the same time, generally, training was pressed forward with energy by the ground force commanders.

An incident of the greatest importance took place late in October. Careful sounding of French military opinion in North Africa by Mr. Murphy had established that certain army and air force elements were favorably disposed toward the Allies, and would welcome the arrival of Allied Forces. To verify this, and to insure that the Allied plan could safely and with advantage be communicated to responsible French officers, a special mission of senior United States officers--a mission headed by Major General Mark W. Clark, Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and dispatched by air and submarine--was landed near ALGIERS on the night of October 22nd - 23rd.

General Mast, who was commanding French military forces in the ALGIERS area, headed the French delegation. He represented a faction headed by General Giraud. The Conference was conducted on a hypothetical basis: "If we do this, what can you do?" The French were certain that some action on the part of the Allied nations was pending, but were not aware of its imminence.

General Mast stated that, given four days' notice, he could guarantee that there would be little or no resistance from French military and air forces, that the probable initial resistance by the Navy (which he did not control) would terminate following successful landings, and that the seizure of ALGIERS and early and rapid movement into the TUNIS area was vital. He guaranteed free entry into BONE. He was arranging a meeting with General Giraud in Southern France and hoped, by October 28th, to obtain Giraud's agreement to participate on the Allied side.

Two delicate points in the negotiations had to do with the matter of British participation in North African affairs and with the question of command. General Clark explained that the United States would require air and naval support from Great Britain, and that later British troops must pass through American bridgeheads in order to engage Axis forces in the TUNIS area. General Clark stated that he could not commit himself on the question of command, beyond saying that it was the desire of the United Nations to turn over the control of NORTH AFRICA to French command as soon as the situation warranted this action. He agreed in principle that the Allies should furnish equipment to the French Forces.

There resulted from this mission which was carried out by General Clark and his brother officers, under conditions of acute hazard, no actual changes in tentative plan. However, the outcome of the mission was extremely encouraging, and it was followed by an agreement on the part of General Giraud to give up his prepared French plans, and by a decision on his part to go to NORTH AFRICA to cooperate with the Allied Forces.

On the same night that General Clark and his party left NORTH AFRICA and were struggling with their small boats in the choppy sea off ALGIERS, the first convoy sailed from the United Kingdom. It was composed of slow ships, due to arrive at ALGIERS on November 11th. The final preparations for this eventful moment had gone forward strenuously but smoothly.

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involving a vast problem for the Movement and Port organizations. Every port in the West Coast of BRITAIN was used to capacity, and even then the large fleet of merchant shipping that was involved in carrying vehicles and stores had to be loaded in relays. This had made it necessary, as the ships were being prepared to sail, to start loading very early; and it had left the staffs a minimum of time to prepare loading tables, after the final plans had been approved.

The movement of many units to and from training schools in SCOTLAND, from IRELAND and the U.S. to GREAT BRITAIN, and finally from training centers to embarkation ports, had placed an exceedingly heavy strain on traffic through those ports. All this traffic had, however, been handled most efficiently by the British Movement organization.

The fast assault and personnel ships had embarked their passengers by October 16th. The Task Forces then sailed to carry out rehearsal exercises at various points on the Southwest of SCOTLAND. These exercises had been prepared by the Combined Operation Organization, in cooperation with A.F.H.Q. and the Task Force Headquarters. They were necessarily limited in scope to rehearsing the night assault by Infantry and supporting troops, and in the exercises only a minimum of vehicles and stores were unloaded.

The assault ships finally sailed from the United Kingdom on October 26th, the Western Task Force from the United States on October 29th. The planning and organization, the hard work and training, the hopes and fears of three months of preparation, were committed to the test.

GIBRALTAR was the pivotal point of the whole operation. Never, in its long and stormy history at the gateway to the Mediterranean, had it played so vital a role. Preparations had early been made to establish there the Allied Force Command Post for the initial operations, and on November 5th I was able to assume full control. Admiral Cunningham's Headquarters were established in the same location, as was that of Coastal Command, R.A.F. Gibraltar, charged with the escort of the convoys during their final approach.

Submarines constituted the biggest menace to the whole enterprise. There were believed to be upwards of forty U-Boats then operating on the Atlantic trade routes, and the three great convoys, each spread out over thirty or forty square miles of sea, offered magnificent targets. Skillful routing, and vigilant escorts, both naval and air, were partly responsible for the highly satisfactory fact that all three convoys reached the AFRICAN coast unscathed. But another unforeseen incident largely contributed to this. Enemy aircraft had sighted and reported a small convoy from SIERRA LEONE, that was bound for the United Kingdom, and that was passing East and Northward of the invasion fleet. The "wolf pack" turned in pursuit and left the route to GIBRALTAR clear.

Another factor which gave rise to concern was the weather. Sixteen days before the operation, meteorological forecasts were favorable, but some days later a depression, originating over NEWFOUNDLAND, was traveling towards the BAY of BISCAY. The strong Southwesterly winds which resulted were not likely to affect North Coast landings, but at CASABLANCA it was blowing dead on shore. Mercifully it had subsided on November 1st, and, except for periodical rain storms of unprecedented violence, the weather became then fine and clear. It appeared certain on November 7th that the landings could take place on schedule.

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On the night of November 5th and the morning of the 6th, the convoy of the Eastern Task Force, with its escort, under the command of Vice Admiral Sir Harold M. Burrough, R.N., passed through the STRAITS. It was followed at 1700 hours on November 6th by the Center Task Force convgr, under the command of Commodore T. H. Troubridge, R.N.

It was clear from subsequent enemy air and submarine dispositions that he was deceived as to our intentions. Squadrons of dive-bombers and fighter aircraft were hastily sent to SARDINIA and SICILY, ready to pounce on the convoys during their supposed passage through "bomb-alley" to MALTA.

No attempt was made to attack the ORAN convoy, and it was not until late afternoon of November 7th that a force of JU-88's bombed the ALGIERS convoy; one of the escorting destroyers suffered slight damage and returned to GIBRALTAR. On the morning of that day, however, the United States Transport THOMAS STONE had been torpedoed by an enemy submarine and was disabled. A notably courageous decision was taken by her commander, Captain Olton R. Bennehoff, to send his escort and boats on to the assault while his ship was thus to be left for a time defenseless. She was eventually towed to ALGIERS by H.M.S. WISHART, and the tug ST. DAY.

As dusk fell on November 7th, the two Mediterranean convoys altered course to the Southward, each arriving at its appointed assembly area dead on time. And, after an uneventful crossing of the Atlantic, the Western Task Force was also, precisely at this time, approaching the MOROCCAN Coast.

From this point, it is necessary, in the interests of clarity, to follow the activities of each Task Force in turn until the conclusion of their primary missions.

WESTERN TASK FORCE

At two o'clock in the morning of November 8th, the transports carrying the Western Task Force, reached their anchorages about eight thousand yards off shore. "H" Hour had been fixed for 0400 hours, but delay in manning the landing craft caused it to be postponed until 0515.

Landings were made at three places: at FEDALA, thirteen miles to the Northeast of CASABLANCA, where the objective was to initiate operations for the capture of the latter important place from the East; in the harbor of SAFI, 130 miles to the Southwest of CASABLANCA, where the immediate aim was to land armor, and to prevent reinforcements at MARAKECH from reaching CASABLANCA; and finally, at MEHDIA, eighty miles to the Northeast of CASABLANCA, where the object was to seize the PORT LYAUTEY airfields and to protect the Northern flank of the entire operation.

All three landings achieved surprise, and by 1015 hours SAFI had been captured, following a successful rushing of the harbor by two destroyers. At FEDALA and PORT LYAUTEY, however, considerable opposition was met, both from aircraft and from shore batteries; the latter were silenced by naval gunfire, and by 1500 hours, FEDALA had fallen. Fighting at PORT LYAUTEY, on the other hand, continued to be fierce throughout the day, and at nightfall the airfield was still in French hands.

Meanwhile two desperate sorties had been made by the French fleet from CASABLANCA. In the first, three light cruisers and five destroyers

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made as if to attack our transports; they were met by the concentrated fire of the BROOKLYN, AUGUSTA, and two destroyers; the MASSACHUSETTS and a cruiser were in support of our vessels upon this occasion but did not at the moment become engaged. One of the French cruisers was damaged, and the remainder of the force withdrew into CASABLANCA. Three hours later, another bid to leave harbor was made by two light cruisers, two destroyers, and the heavy cruiser PRIMAGUET. This time the 16-inch guns of the MASSACHUSETTS were brought into action; at the same time naval aircraft dive-bombed the unhappy French ships. One destroyer was sunk, and PRIMAGUET, burning fiercely, was towed back into port.

Several efforts by gallant American officers were made to end this senseless and distressing bloodshed by attempting to contact the French authorities in CASABLANCA for the arrangement of an Armistice. But Admiral Michelier refused to receive them.

Throughout the next two days fighting continued, and our forces steadily enlarged their bridgeheads and unloaded equipment despite a heavy surf which took toll of the landing craft. On November 10th the airfield at PORT LYAUTEY was captured, but troops advancing on CASABLANCA from FEDALA were held up by stiff resistance. The force at SAFI engaged and successfully repelled reinforcements for CASABLANCA that were advancing from MARRAKECH, and then this force moved Northward. As it neared CASABLANCA, it was bombarded by two French destroyers; and at the same time the shore batteries at CASABLANCA, and the battleship JEAN BART opened fire on our ships. Retaliation was swift and deadly. One of the destroyers was sunk, the shore batteries were silenced, and JEAN BART was severely damaged.

Plans were made for a concerted attack upon CASABLANCA at 0730 hours the following morning. At 0700 hours, the French, acting upon orders from Admiral Darlan, capitulated.

CENTER TASK FORCE

The four landings in the vicinity of ORAN were delayed in taking off; but, under cover of darkness and aided by complete surprise, they succeeded in putting their parties ashore undetected. The landings began at 0135 hours on November 8th, and were completed by 0300 hours. A Ranger Battalion took ARZEU, a port thirty miles East of ORAN, and thereupon within a few hours at this point our supply ships had anchored and had begun to discharge cargo. Combat Command "B" was landed East of ARZEU, and it advanced thence Westward to seize the airfields at TAFARAOUI and at LA SENIA.

The very ambitious plan that we had projected to seize the airfields by means of the longest paratroop mission in history went largely astray. The 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry set out from ENGLAND in thirty-nine C-47's with instructions which presupposed an unopposed landing, and failed to receive the later instructions which warned them of probable French opposition. The formation became partially scattered over SPAIN by a storm and the leading elements, which reached TAFARAOUI, encountered flak. These elements, therefore, landed near LOURMEL, and after later elements had joined them, flew back to TAFARAOUI. The paratroop mission as such was a failure, but the paratroopers proved a valuable addition to the combat troops which captured the airfield at TAFARAOUI.

Near ARZEU, our landing craft brought ashore the 16th and 18th Regimental Combat Teams; these then started directly an advance on ORAN by

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road. To the West at LES ANDALOUSES, another group of assault ships landed the 26th Regimental Combat Team. This Team, advancing on ORAN from the West carried the heights of DJEBEL MURDJADA on the Western outskirts of the city. A fourth group came ashore Northwest of LOURMEL, and moved in to take the airfield there. The only opposition to these operations came from a coastal battery above ARZEU, and from French units at LOURMEL, which opened fire when it became light, about dawn. Resistance developed apace during the day as our troops began to advance on ORAN.

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Although our ground forces made land safely, our assault on ORAN harbor came to grief. Before dawn, two former United States cutters, now H.M.S. WALNEY and HARTLAND, which were flying both the British and United States ensigns and were carrying two companies of American Rangers and special anti-sabotage parties, headed into ORAN harbor. They were escorted by Motor Launches 480 and 483, and their mission was to prevent blocking of the port and destruction of harbor facilities. Outside the entrance, the little force waited until an announcement in French was made by loudspeaker from the WALNEY, and then, with WALNEY in the lead, and with minelayers laying down a smokescreen, they broke the booms and dashed into the harbor. Here they came under an overwhelming fire from shore batteries and from French warcraft. The companies of WALNEY and HARTLAND behaved with extraordinary courage and perseverance, and the two ships reached their objectives, but they were set ablaze and were disabled. Most of both the crews and the troops were casualties, the two Captains had to abandon ship, and the survivors were made prisoners by the French.

Off shore, the covering force engaged in several decisive actions throughout the day. H.M.S. AURORA opened fire shortly before dawn on one of the French destroyers which had raked the WALNEY and then put to sea. After a brisk fight this French destroyer was sunk. Two other destroyers put out from ORAN, and after standing by their burning consort, engaged the AURORA with torpedoes and gunfire. In a running fight, both destroyers were mortally hit; one was beached and left burning, and the other made for ORAN. Throughout the day, FORT DJEBEL and SANTON in ORAN shelled the beaches, and the RODNEY was compelled to bombard them with her main armament to silence them, inflicting thus upon them serious damage.

During the day of November 8th, our forces moved to their objectives, though not without opposition. In the course of the morning, Combat Command "B" took TAFARAOUI airfield and advanced on LA SENIA. Early that afternoon, 26 United States Spitfires flew into TAFARAOUI from Gibraltar; one Spitfire was shot down by a French pursuit plane just as the former was about to land. The 16th and 18th Regimental Combat Teams advancing from ARZEU toward ORAN, met increasingly strong resistance as they neared the city, and by nightfall they had gone forward between 15 and 20 miles. What is more, the 26th Regimental Combat Team moved toward ORAN from the West, and overcame such opposition as appeared in their line of advance up to the vicinity of their goal.

Throughout the next day we continued to build up our force ashore and to gain ground against stubborn resistance. The 16th Infantry Regiment met heavy resistance at LANACIA from French troops, which were believed to have been moved in from MOSTAGANEM, but with supporting fire from H.M.S. FARNDALE gained the day and advanced to within ten miles of ORAN. In the same area, the 18th Infantry Regiment encountered French Infantry and tanks, and had stiff fighting before reaching MANGIN, ten miles from ORAN, by nightfall. Elements of Combat Command "B" had to fight all day for control of the airfield at LA SENIA. Through the day, too, the field at TAFARAOUI was being busily

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operated; it was being used as a base by the 12th Air Force and was made a place of assembly by some elements of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry.

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By the morning of November 10th, the 1st Infantry Division was in position on the Eastern edge of ORAN, and the Armored Combat Command was drawn up on the Southern outskirts of the city. At 0737 hours they launched a coordinated attack; by 1100 hours, armored units had penetrated the city, and at noon the city surrendered. Major General Fredendall received the formal capitulation of the French Commanding General at 1230 hours.

EASTERN TASK FORCE

The ALGIERS area, the most important of the three Task Force objectives, and the most unpredictable and uncertain in its reception of that Force proved to be the easiest to secure as events developed. The three beaches that we proceeded to occupy here were located: Northeast of CASTIGLIONE, between CAP SIDI FERRUCH and POINTE PESCADE; and on both sides of AIN TAYA. The first two lie West of ALGIERS, and the AIN TAYA locality is East of the City. Fortune favored the landings; the sea was calm, we avoided the treacherous rocks of the coast, and a surprise was achieved. There was some opposition from naval and coast defense units, but for the most part the landings went unresisted.

At dawn, several of the forts in this area opened fire. The coastal positions Northwest of ALGIERS kept up a fairly steady fire from morning until, in mid-afternoon, they were put out of action by heavy bombing and by naval bombardment. The CAP MATIFOU Battery which resisted obstinately during the morning was finally silenced by gunfire from H.M.S. BERMUDA, and by bombing by aircraft from the Fleet Air Arm. The latter force rendered excellent service that day in bombing and fighter protection to aid the ground forces and the fleet. FORT DUPERE held out until it was bombed. For a while in the afternoon, the 39th Regimental Combat Team met strong resistance at FORT DE L'EAU, but the latter eventually was taken. At the chief airfield at MAISON BLANCHE, there was a slight brush with French tanks, but we had possession of the field and its defenses by 0830 hours. Not long after that time we were able to use this field for 19 Hurricanes and 35 Spitfires of the R.A.F., which flew in from GIBRALTAR.

Meantime, as at ORAN, a direct attack on the harbor to gain control of harbor equipment and prevent sabotage, met with violent opposition. Two British destroyers, BROKE and MALCOLM, carried a Commando unit and anti-sabotage parties to attack the ALGIERS port. The BROKE drove through the boom and landed her troops under rifle and machine gun fire from the quays. At about 0730 hours, the BROKE became the target for shellfire from a shore battery, received serious damage, and had to retire under cover of a smoke screen laid by the ZETLAND. The ZETLAND later took her in tow, but as the wind and sea rose the BROKE made bad going and foundered in the afternoon of November 10th. Her companion, the MALCOLM, was hit by a shore battery outside the harbor, and with three boilers knocked out, she had to withdraw and berth on the BULOLO at anchor in the bay. Two United States combat loaders had also been damaged by gunfire and by bombing.

During the day of November 8th, the Task Force Commander, Major General C. W. Ryder, went ashore to confer with a representative of Admiral Darlan. They reached an agreement that all resistance should cease and that our forces should occupy the city at 1900 hours. By

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nightfall, the United States 39th and 168th Regimental Combat Teams and the British 11th Brigade Group had come ashore. At dawn the next morning H.M.S. BULOLO, Headquarters Ship for the Task Force, entered the harbor and berthed alongside, receiving an enthusiastic welcome from a large crowd of onlookers.

THE ARMISTICE

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On November 10th, Admiral Darlan broadcast an order calling on all French forces in NORTH AFRICA to cease resistance, and by 0700 hours the following morning, hostilities finally ceased on the Front of the Western Task Force. Although we had established our position in the ALGIERS and ORAN areas by actual conquest, albeit against very indifferent opposition, it is important to remember that in French MOROCCO opposition ceased, not as the result of our conquest, but by order of the Admiral.

Our decision to treat with Darlan was dictated by considerations of sheer military expediency, and it was acquiesced in with good grace by General Giraud. In fact, General Giraud, to whom we had looked as the one man who could galvanize French effort in our favor, personally told me on the morning of November 13th, that Darlan was the only man who could prevent, at that time, the rise of chaotic conditions in NORTH AFRICA. We had hoped that the presence of Giraud with our forces and his appeal to the French of NORTH AFRICA would rekindle the spirit of FRANCE in them and would bring them into active alliance with the United Nations, but we had reckoned without the corroding effect of two years of the distilled poison of Axis propaganda, and, above all, we had reckoned without the magic of the name of Marshal Petain.

We discovered that the actual state of French sentiment in NORTH AFRICA did not even remotely agree with some of our prior calculations. We learned that the name of Petain was something to conjure with; that all officials, from highest to lowest, were attempting to create the impression that they lived and acted under the shadow of the Marshal's figure; and that the civil governors, military leaders, and naval commanders could agree on only one man as having the obvious right to assume the Marshal's mantle in NORTH AFRICA. That man was Darlan. The resistance, that was initially opposed to our landings, had been in the Marshal's name, and only a man recognized as having the right to speak in his name could both end the resistance and provide us with positive cooperation. The demonstrated effectiveness of Darlan's order to cease fire gave ground for hopes that he could provide us with effective assistance as well. Giraud, himself, was among the first to recognize the situation, and he willingly accepted the post of Military Chief in Darlan's government.

The gist of the commitment signed by Darlan was that the French were to give us immediately as much active assistance as lay within their powers for the seizure of TUNISIA, which was our next objective. They were to organize the government of NORTH AFRICA for effective cooperation, and under Giraud's leadership were to begin the reorganization of selected military forces for active participation in the fighting.

Lacking such an engagement on their part we would have been faced with the necessity of undertaking complete military occupation, for which we had neither the time nor the resources. In MOROCCO alone, according to General Patton's calculations, we would have required

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60,000 men to keep the tribes quiet, and we had been faced with the danger that any tribal disturbance might tempt SPAIN to intervene against our very insecure lines of communication. Moreover, if Darlan's assistance could solve these problems for us by bringing NORTH AFRICA to our support, he might well be able to gain us DAKAR in French WEST AFRICA as well, not to mention the French Fleet in TOULON.

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Finally, apart from granting us a secure base from which to move towards our next objective, there appeared to be a reasonable chance that Darlan might be able to intervene effectively with Admiral Esteva, the French Commander in TUNISIA, to forestall the Axis and to assist our own occupation of that important land. We had heard that Admiral Esteva was willing to obey Admiral Darlan, and we badly needed his support. Our plan, to rush light forces from ALGIERS to TUNISIA in order to anticipate the Axis, was a bold scheme, which had in it many of the elements of a gamble. It called for an effort to exploit initial success with the hope that we might gain a great prize at low cost, and might induce the French to provide us with one of the surest guarantees of complete success by resisting strongly any attempted landings by the Axis in TUNISIA. We hoped that such resistance as this on the part of the French would materialize because of the important military advantages that we had already gained through our negotiations with Darlan.

THE RACE FOR TUNISIA

Our chief hope of anticipating the Axis in TUNISIA lay in our acting with utmost speed. Indeed, we were involved in a race, not only against the build-up of enemy forces at TUNIS and BIZERTE, but against the weather as well. Northern TUNISIA is a country of high mountains with narrow plains between the ranges; and it has few roads, and there is in the land very little scope for armored action. The coastal mountains and the valleys a few miles inland, as well as the coastal plain which opens at TUNIS and BIZERTE, are an area with a heavy rainfall that totals more than 25 inches annually. The period of heaviest rains begins in late November, or early December and continues through February. During this season the lowlands become a particularly glutinous sea of mud. On the one hand, the date and places of our landings in NORTH AFRICA gave us practically no margin. There was less than a month of fair weather ahead; and Axis Air and ground forces were within easy striking distance of TUNIS and BIZERTE, less than 100 miles away from these places across the SICILIAN narrows. All the same, our Easternmost force was at ALGIERS, 560 miles West of TUNIS. Necessarily, therefore we had to rely on a rapid advance of very light forces, understrength in both personnel and equipment.

Even with all these odds against us, we only just failed to win the race. What finally tipped the scales decisively against us was the fact that the French, whose resistance to our forces at ALGIERS, though feeble, continued for two days, offered no resistance at all to the first German landings at EL AOUIA airport on November 9th, with the result that German forces began their build-up in TUNISIA before we were able to begin the move east from ALGIERS. Although French forces in TUNISIA under General Barre, Juin, and Koeltz finally joined our own about November 18th, it was too late to overcome the fatal effects of that almost morbid sense of honor which had led the French initially to resist us, their deliverers, while they were leaving their back door open to the enemy.

On November 9th, after the landings had been effected under American auspices, Lieutenant General Anderson arrived at ALGIERS from GIBRALTAR to take over command of the British Desert Army. Anderson's

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plan was to seize as rapidly as possible all the ports to the East, BOUGIE, PHILIPPEVILLE, BONE, and LA CALLE, in that order, and then was to rush his forces forward by motor transport, landing craft, and troop-carrying aircraft. For the success of the venture it was essential also to seize coastal airfields and to install fighter aircraft in order to provide adequate cover. Therefore, he ordered Major General V. Eveleigh, Commander of the British 78th Division, to carry out the prearranged plan for simultaneous action against the port of BOUGIE and against DJIDJELLI airfield, a short distance further along the coast. He directed that this officer should act with the assistance of naval forces under the command of Captain N. V. Dickinson, R.N.

The 36th Brigade of the 78th Division--our floating reserve of the original Eastern Task Force--was still aboard its ships in ALGIERS harbor, so late on the evening of November 10th this force sailed Eastward to accomplish its mission in the race for TUNISIA. Landing by this force on the following day was unopposed, but one battalion which had been assigned the mission of capturing DJIDJELLI from the sea was unable to get ashore because of a heavy swell, and therefore returned to BOUGIE in order to make the approach by land. DJIDJELLI could not be taken until November 13th, and during the interim, when little air cover could be provided, the enemy bombed and sank three United States Combat Loaders in BOUGIE harbor. Also he inflicted slight damage on H. M. Aircraft Carrier ARGUS whose pilots had shot down 11 enemy planes for the loss of 3 of our own. Personnel losses were not serious but as the result of losses of equipment, our infantry for some time had none but what they carried, and no clothing but what they had been wearing when they left the ships.

Our initial rush was made with a force that at its strongest was the equivalent of scarcely more than a single infantry division, and one tank regiment, neither of them at full strength. The 78th Division was not complete until December 1st, and the British 6th Armored Division was not fully established in the forward areas until December 15th. We first occupied BONE with two companies of the 3rd Parachute Battalion and with the 6th Commando Battalion. The former was dropped by air to hold the airfield and the latter was landed by sea on November 12th to seize the port. On November 11, C-47's of the United States 65th Troop Carrier Command landed British Parachutists of the 3rd Battalion at MAISON BLANCHE airport, after a flight from ENGLAND by way of GIBRALTAR, and the day following successfully dropped these Parachutists at the BONE airfield. The operation was a complete success, but that night a heavy and prolonged bombardment by Axis planes threatened to make the field untenable. The situation was restored on November 13th by the return of the C-47's ferrying much needed supplies of anti-aircraft guns and petrol for fighter planes.

Other forces moved up quickly. One battalion of the 36th Brigade had arrived by sea from BOUGIE by November 13th, and another had by that date reached SETIF by rail. Also some artillery and servicing units had arrived by sea, but none of the vehicles and motor transport of the Brigade had then as yet been able to land. By November 15th, a small column of all arms from the 11th Infantry Brigade Group--known as the HART FORCE--arrived by road from ALGIERS; they had acquired their mobility by monopolizing all of their own brigade's transport.

Our rapid advance continued, and by November 15th, leading elements of the 36th Brigade had occupied TABARKA, only about 60 miles from TUNIS, with other battalions following closely. On the same day,

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the British 1st Parachute Battalion attempted to land at SOUK EL ARBA airfield, due South of TABARKA in the MEDJERDA valley which runs north-east to the GULF OF TUNIS, and, although thwarted by weather in the first attempt on the 15th, successfully landed the day following. By November 17th this force had advanced Northeast beyond the important communications center of BEJA, where it first gained contact with German troops.

Meantime, by November 18th, the follow-up convoy of ships had arrived at BONE, bringing the balance of transport of the 78th Division (less one Brigade Group), the armored BLADE FORCE, (Composed of the 17/21st Lancers Regimental Group), and the 1st Parachute Brigade (less one battalion). Units and sub-units of the 78th Division and of BLADE FORCE were moved East as fast as the necessary transport could be unloaded. By November 20th, BLADE FORCE was established in the SOUK EL ARBA area, and the 11th Brigade Group of the 78th Division was concentrated in the BEJA area two days later.

Similarly we took steps to secure airfields farther South. On November 15th, Colonel Edson D. Raff's United States 503rd Paratroop Battalion dropped at YOUS LES BAINS without opposition, and began to operate offensively from its newly won base. Two days later detachments from the same battalion occupied GAFSA airfield, far to the South, and mobile patrols roamed widely over the entire Southern area in requisitioned transport, meeting small Italian forces. The same group established cordial relations with a French garrison at TEBESSA, and that garrison thereupon promptly gave signs of their good will by arresting the Italian members of the Armistice Commission in that area, and by cooperation in the frequent patrol activity.

Signs of French cooperation had already begun to appear at this same time in the North. On the 16th reports were received from General Koeltz' XIX Corps, that his forces were in contact with a German motorcycle reconnaissance patrol between BEJA and DJEBEL ABOID, to the North; and, on the same day, French forces at OUED ZARGA and MATEUR--the latter not more than 20 miles from BIZERTE--drove off German patrols. Our plans for offensive action were now able to count on at least some measure of French assistance. Although General Barre, as Commander of all French Forces in TUNISIA had negotiated with General von Arnim ever since the arrival of German forces, he now agreed that his forces would cover the concentration of our 78th Division in the TABARKA-SOUK EL ARBA-GHARDIMAOU area and that they would likewise cover, to the best of their ability, our right flank during our subsequent advance on TUNIS. On November 17th, General Anderson issued orders to the 78th Division to complete its concentration in the forward area in preparation for an advance on TUNIS to destroy the Axis forces.

As quickly as the first signs of French tactical cooperation began to appear I proposed to Giraud that the whole Eastern front be placed under General Anderson's command. I met the most bitter opposition to the idea. Giraud even said that any such attempt, at that time, would result in open French rebellion. Instead, he proposed that he take command of the front. Manifestly, I could not agree.

Around the middle of November we estimated Axis strength at 500 to 1,000 fighting personnel in the area of TUNIS, and at about 4,000 at BIZERTE, with some tanks in each case, and with aircraft which had been flown in; at the time JU-52's averaged more than 50 landings a day at BIZERTE. The enemy had occupied MATEUR and had pushed out West and South, gaining contact with advance elements of our 36th Brigade Group West of DJEBEL ABOID, and with the French at

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SIDI N'SIR and MEDJEZ EL BAB. Subsequent operations took place along three clearly defined axes: along the Northern road directly East from TABARKA via DJEBEL ABIOD to MATEUR; along the more Southerly road Northeast from BEJA to SIDI N'SIR and MATEUR; and along the main road due east from BEJA to TUNIS, via MEDJEZ EL BAB and TEBOURBA.

It was the enemy who seized the initiative, by attacking the French at MEDJEZ EL BAB on November 18th and 19th. Von Arnim sent two separate ultimatums, demanding French surrender, which was not conceded by General Barre; and the ill-equipped French, assailed three times by infantry supported by tanks, artillery and dive-bombers, suffered 25 per cent casualties. They sent us urgent pleas for air support, which we could not supply, and after a gallant stand retired to OUED ZARGA. During the same period an enemy attack at DJEBEL ABIOD, to the North, was contained by the leading battalion of our 36th Brigade. In the engagement on this occasion our forces destroyed 8 of the 30 enemy tanks that they engaged, and, supported by British parachute elements, by a British Armored Car Column, and by a battery of United States Field Artillery, the French counter-attacked at MEDJEZ EL BAB.

Though we were able thus to hold the enemy in check, it was clear, however, that our 78th Division was not as yet strong enough to press the advance. Hence they were ordered to delay temporarily any move forward until the build-up of forces and supplies was sufficient to give the assault on TUNIS a reasonable chance of success. We had also to straighten out the considerable intermixture of French and British units which had occurred as a result of rapid improvisation following the French decision to act with us. Our intention was to relieve all French forces operating in the 78th Division area, so that they could be concentrated under General Barre's command for the protection of our right flank on the line LE KEF - TEBOURSOUK - TESTOUR. By November 23rd we had reached a preliminary verbal agreement, by which all troops remaining North of the line LE KEF - ZAGHOUAN should be under the command of the British First Army, while all troops South of the line should be subject to French command.

This was unsatisfactory, not only tactically, but also logistically, since there was a single line of ammunition from rear to front. However, it was the best that could be achieved at the moment; and I had to accept personally the additional burdens placed upon me by the French refusal to serve under a British commander.

By November 24th General Anderson had completed the forward concentration of the 78th Division and BLADE FORCE, with provision for follow-up by the British 6th Armored Division, then en route to TEBOURSOUK, and by Combat Command "B" from the United States 1st Armored Division, which was then on the way up to SOUK EL ARBA. General Anderson ordered immediate attack with a first objective in the capture of the line TEBOURBA - MATEUR.

During the night of November 24th-25th, BLADE FORCE, operating in the center, penetrated the enemy outpost position to a point midway between MATEUR and TEBOURBA; and the 11th Brigade, on the right, advanced Northeastward in the MEDJERDA valley where it overcame stubborn resistance and captured MEDJEZ EL BAB. For the first three days progress was steady. The 11th Brigade with the 2nd Battalion, 13th United States Armored Regiment, and the 56th Reconnaissance Regiment (less than two Squadrons), moved astride the river toward TEBOURBA, which was taken during the night of November 26th-27th, and was successfully defended against counter-attack on the following day. On November 28th, our forces reached the outskirts of DJEDEIDA, less than 16 miles

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from TUNIS. This constituted the foremost advance towards the TUNISIAN capital that we were ever able to attain before the conclusion of the campaign, six months later. Here we were stopped, and elsewhere our progress had already slowed.

In the North, the 36th Brigade had initially advanced about 10 miles in the direction of MATEUR, against very little opposition; but thereafter found its progress considerably slowed by enemy mines and booby traps. At the same time, BLADE FORCE, in the plains South of MATEUR, began to encounter supply difficulties which were enhanced by the beginning of rains. In every sector the enemy's dive-bombing was an important factor in finally stopping our advance, because our own airfields were too far away to provide us with the necessary cover.

By late November it became evident that the enemy was present in TUNISIA in considerable strength, and that he intended to stand and fight on the entire front. By this date, indeed, forces of the Axis which had arrived in that land, exclusive of service troops, amounted to approximately 15,500 combat troops, 130 tanks, 60 field guns, and 30 anti-tank guns; and they included such formidable units of air force troops as the Barethin Regiment, and the Storm Regiment Koch. Most serious of all was the enemy's possession of concrete-surfaced airfields in the TUNIS - BIZERTE area, to which planes could be flown from SICILY in half an hour, and in almost any weather; whereas our nearest dependable field was at BONE, 114 miles away, with an advance landing ground at SOUK EL ARBA, which became increasingly unusable as the rains began, and as the surface began to mire. British Spitfires could fly over the lines for not more than five or ten minutes, and the few P-38's available were insufficient to furnish continuous patrols. German JU-87's were close to the front, and the extraordinary coordination of German ground-air communication made the enemy's air support available in the front lines within five or ten minutes of the demand. Under such conditions German aircraft merely fled at the approach of the Allied Planes, and returned easily to the assault when the skies were clear.

With our long lines of communications, with insufficient landing grounds, and with an inadequate number of planes for the missions they had to perform, it became increasingly difficult to cope with the air-power that was aligned against us. We had had to furnish escort for parachute troops participating in attack; and we had to cover our shipping at BONE, where we were suffering serious losses from bombing. We not only suffered high combat casualties, but, as a result of inadequate fields, we sustained serious operational losses as well. In all, our attrition rate was above the 20 per cent allowed for, and, under such circumstances, although we bombed the enemy's fields, we could not seriously curb his increasing air-power.

We held our forward positions until the end of November; and then, with the arrival in the forward areas of Combat Command "B", General Anderson ordered for December 2nd an attack toward TUNIS by this new unit and by BLADE FORCE. The attack was not made, however, because it was anticipated on December 1st by an enemy attack with dive-bombers, infantry, and tanks, which heavily engaged BLADE FORCE near TEBOURBA, and inflicted severe tank losses. BLADE FORCE had by this time lost a total of 40 tanks, and was withdrawn on the evening of the 2nd, leaving the defense of the forward areas to the 11th Brigade, and to the armored infantry of Combat Command "B", which had now to be ordered forward in a defensive role. On December 3rd the enemy attacked again near TEBOURBA, penetrated the 11th Brigade positions, and finally cut that unit off completely. The Brigade managed to extricate itself during the night, but

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the 2nd Hamshires, who did not receive the order to withdraw, suffered heavily. Dive-bombing had again been on a devastating scale, and losses of equipment were again considerable.

By December 4th it was clear that our offensive against TUNIS would have to be postponed to give time for the refitting of badly battered troops, and for a build-up of adequate resources. Several battalions of the 78th Division were under 350 strong, and the strain of persistent dive-bombing was beginning to tell.

On December 8th I approved General Anderson's proposal to withdraw his forces to more defensible ground. This I considered advisable, but I was resolved that no vital areas were to be given up, and the important center of MEDJEZ EL BAB was to be held at all costs. I personally accepted the responsibility for any disaster, much feared by the First Army Commander, that might result from the decision to hold MEDJEZ. It was my hope and trust that only a limited withdrawal would suffice to provide the troops under General Anderson with a necessary rest and refitting, and with a breathing spell, that would permit us to build up a week's supply at the railheads.

The supply needs of the First Army were most pressing precisely at the time when our entire communications system was under its most severe strain. Throughout November the administrative organization had been taxed to the limit in an effort to support our rapid Eastward advance, and during the first weeks following the landings, when there were no reserves on the ground, supplies for the forward troops had to be dispatched to them almost direct from the ship's hold by any expedient possible. In the earlier convoys both administrative personnel and vehicles had necessarily been kept to a minimum, and the rapid advance absorbed an ever larger proportion of the available vehicles for the transport of troops and their supplies, with a corresponding reduction in the number used for port clearance and transport in the base area. Nor could we supply the transport deficiency by too heavy reliance on the North African Railway system, despite the cordial and cooperative efforts of the great majority of French railway authorities, both civil and military, to make their facilities available. The railways were heavily handicapped by lack of maintenance during the war, and there was a serious shortage of locomotives, of rolling stock and of trained operating personnel.

The urgent need for certain classes of supply, and particularly for ammunition, necessitated a selective discharge of ships in the ports, and in many cases, a selective movement of trains or even of individual wagons. Such interruptions as this of the normal flow of traffic, together with the shortage of road transport, caused a rapidly increasing congestion of stores on the docks, along the lines of communication, and at railheads. By mid-December the congestion was so bad that it became necessary to stop all rail loadings at ports and depots for a period of four days. This was required in order to clear the heavily overloaded rail lines before the regular flow of traffic could be resumed. Even so late as early January, after we had increased the effective capacity of our lines of communication by the establishment of depots, and by the accumulation of small reserves which permitted an improvement in our control of maintenance movement, our transport system was still unable to meet the full requirements of the forward troops.

More and more in time the weather appeared to be our worst enemy, crippling both our offense and defense, and making it increasingly difficult either to advance or to withdraw. Rains saturated the valleys of Northern TUNISIA, and made a quagmire of the airfields. While enemy

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aircraft continued to use their all-weather airports, our bombers were glued in the mud; and, when they could take off, it was frequently only to discover that their primary targets were shrouded in clouds. Two thirds of the aircraft at SOUK EL ARRAJ were inoperative because of the mud. Consequently, we were unable to prevent a steady inflow of men and of supplies, by air and by sea, from SICILY into TUNISIA. By December 18th, we estimated the forces of the enemy in that land numbered a total of 42,100 men, and of whom at least 24,800 were German. Not only did this number increase day by day, and not only was the flow of supplies to support those forces steady, but also we knew that many of the supplies brought thus into TUNISIA were trans-shipped by rail to SFAX, and thence by rail and by sea to Rommel's forces in TRIPOLITANIA.

Incidentally, the weather hampered the movement of our forces under General Anderson in withdrawal, although fortunately that withdrawal was accomplished with a minimum of enemy interference. However, United States Combat Command "B" became badly mired and finally had to abandon the larger part of its equipment, retrieving only three of its eighteen 105 MM Howitzers; twelve of its 62 medium tanks; and 38 of its 122 light tanks.

It was a crippling loss, well-nigh irreplaceable because our supply system was already overtaxed, and because our losses now hindered still further our efforts to compete with the rate of Axis build-up. I had supported General Anderson's First Army with every bit of American strength that could be sent forward in the effort to achieve decisive results, and necessarily, American units had been used piecemeal in the desperate effort to win a quick victory. The continuous fighting, with its serious attrition of British units, hindered the build-up of reserves, and as soon as reinforcements reached the line they were immediately absorbed by the fighting units. Nevertheless, at this stage, I was absolutely unwilling to give up thoughts of an all out effort to win control of the critical area of TUNISIA. I still hoped that by a decisive blow we could avoid settling down into a logistic marathon with the Axis, if only we could get a spell of good weather, and secure some respite from the continual harassment of the enemy's spoiling attacks.

We could no longer hope to capture the whole of TUNISIA by a single stroke, but we might still be able to seize the city of TUNIS, crowding the enemy back into BIZERTE, and BIZERTE itself might be ours in another month. The enemy was superior in both number and quality of tanks, but we had a decided advantage in artillery. It was, in truth, our hope that our artillery could dispose of the enemy tanks. Moreover, although the morale of German Armored and Air Force troops was of the highest, it did not appear from the specimens that we had captured and were holding prisoner, that the enemies' infantry was his best. Accordingly, I decided to launch an attack about December 20th with the capture of TUNIS as the minimum objective.

Again the weather frustrated our plans. After the middle of December it steadily worsened. I visited the front at this time, and discovered by actual test that, off the roads, we could not maneuver any type of vehicle. I saw four men engaged in a futile struggle to extricate a motorcycle that had mired in a flat grassy field. Air operations were virtually closed down as a result of the appalling conditions on the ground and in the skies. The broken stone which we laid down to give solidity to the air fields merely sank in the mud, and to surface adequately a single runway, we required 2,000 tons of steel matting. Such a quantity would absorb for at least two days the entire capacity of the dumps in the forward area, for their usable daily capacity at that time was only 950 tons. And this was a

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time, it should be remembered, when all that tonnage was urgently required to supply the immediate needs of our troops. Since our only real hope of victory lay in the use of air power, and in the skillful maneuver of artillery to blast the enemy's armor, our operations had again to be postponed, and, on December 24th, were finally abandoned.

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The abandonment of our immediate offensive plans was the bitterest disappointment that I had yet suffered, but I was convinced that to attempt a major attack under prevailing conditions in Northern TUNISIA would be merely to court disaster. We could not hope to resume major operations in the North until the middle of March, and we had to set about the slow business of building up for an attack at the end of that period. The logistic marathon, which I had desperately tried to avoid, had begun.

THE SFAX PROJECT

With the abandonment of offensive plans in the North it became necessary to look closely to the situation that could easily develop along the vast front extending from PONT DU FAHS to GAFSA. Von Arnim in the North and Rommel in TRIPOLITANIA could, either one, strike a crippling blow through the thin screen of French troops and American paratroopers attempting to cover the TEBESSA region. A strong mobile flank guard was indicated. As early as December 15th, I had given instructions to General Clark to study the possibility of concentrating the United States First Armored Division in that region, together with as much United States Infantry as could be made available and supplied there. My purpose, clearly explained to Generals Clark and Fredendall, was to hold on lightly to the line of hills covering the forward airfields, including those at THELEPTE, with a fully unified and armored division concentrated behind that screen to strike any force attempting to penetrate it. Any favorable opportunity to act offensively, particularly against Rommel's communications, was to be seized. As the staff began the study of this directive, a potential developed that became known as the "SFAX PROJECT". It had several aspects, one of which was a possibility of regaining the initiative directly, even if only on a limited scale. Moreover, there appeared to be some possibility of effective action against the enemy lines of communication linking von Arnim and Rommel through the port of SFAX, which was the chief loading point for supplies sent by sea to TRIPOLI. If successful, such an operation as this would have the further advantage of providing flank protection for the First Army in the North against the otherwise inevitable junction of Rommel and von Arnim. An offensive against CAGES and SFAX could be mounted in the TEBESSA - KASSERINE area with every prospect of better weather conditions than those which now prevailed in Northern TUNISIA, but it was difficult to find the troops for the task, and still more difficult to supply them. From the beginning of the planning on this project, the instructions were positive that under no circumstances would we attempt to seize and hold a particular point where siege conditions might ensue.

The bulk of the United States armed forces were still in the rear areas, and here the Western and Center Task Forces, which composed them, were committed to the protection of our extended lines of communication from the threat of hostile action through SPANISH MOROCCO. However, I decided to detach the United States II Corps -- of which the United States First Armored Division was the nucleus -- from the Center Task Force at ORAN and to concentrate it forward where it could undertake a new combat mission. I thought for a time of appointing General Clark to command the operation, but I

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needed his services in the West, and on January 1st, 1943, I appointed the commander of a newly created Fifth Army which consolidated the remainder of the Center Task Force with the Western Task Force, with a mission of guarding the lines of communications, and of training for whatever offensive operations might be required in the future. Meantime his area was organized to maintain the flow of supplies necessary to sustain the British First Army, and to mount the new operation. The United States Services of Supply established an Atlantic Base Section at CASABLANCA and a Mediterranean Base Section at ORAN.

On January 1st, I appointed General Fredendall to command the II Corps, including the French CONSTANTINE Division and a British Paratroop Brigade, and ordered him to prepare plans for the concentration of his forces in the TEBESSA - KASSERINE area with the mission of protecting our right flank, and with a view to offensive action against the enemy's lines of communication. On the same date I issued orders to the Commanding General, XII Air Force, to concentrate XII Air Support Command in the same sector to support the operation, and directed the British Air Officer Commanding, Eastern Air Command, to provide the assistance of 242 Group insofar as it was not committed at that time to the support of First Army operations. By the middle of January the United States II Corps had completed its concentration in the TEBESSA - KASSERINE area, and I then ordered General Fredendall to be ready to launch his attack by January 23rd.

On the administrative side, the mounting of this operation required a very rapid build-up of maintenance reserves in the TEBESSA-KASSERINE area. Moreover, its successful development to SFAX necessitated an increase in the load of the metre gauge railway from OULED RAHMOUN to a point well beyond its capacity. The limit in this instance was imposed by a shortage and deterioration of locomotives and rolling stock. It was apparent that the rail lines of communication could not operate beyond SBEITLA and FERIANA, and that from these railheads for over 150 miles Eastward the force would be dependant upon truck transport for its maintenance. As a result, I found it necessary to transfer truck units from the port and base areas, where congestion on quays had to be accepted. By rail and by road haul from the normal gauge railway, and from newly formed depots in the CONSTANTINE - OULED RAHMOUN area, a maintenance supply reserve of over 20,000 tons was built up at TEBESSA and beyond by the end of January.

On January 15th, however, I visited ANFA Camp on the outskirts of CASABLANCA in order that I might report on the TUNISIAN campaign to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, who were then in conference with Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt; and what I learned there of the British Eighth Army's schedule, led me to abandon the SFAX offensive altogether. However, I reiterated my instructions that the United States First Armored Division was to be kept intact under the concept above outlined. Our plan had in it serious elements of risk and its success depended upon the perfect coordination of its movements with those of the Eighth Army advancing through TRIPOLITANIA. I had planned to have General Anderson's First Army maintain an aggressive defensive in order to contain von Arnim's forces, but there was danger that the latter might thin out his forces in the North and defeat our SFAX drive, unless the British Eighth Army was in time to join us in the South. At ANFA I learned that Montgomery could not arrive at the MARETH Line in time to coordinate his attack with our own toward SFAX. He did not expect to reach TRIPOLI before late January, and before he could advance farther than that he would have to clear the port and procure the necessary petrol supply for further operations. It was unlikely that he could attack the MARETH Line before the middle of February.

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I had persistently been very reluctant to use up General Anderson's resources by the constant attrition of maintaining pressure on von Arnim at the very time that we were attempting to build up the First Army for a major offensive by the middle of March.

We estimated that von Arnim was receiving 750 men per day with necessary supplies, and that his total forces numbered about 65,000 by this time. To build up our own forces, and to interdict the enemy's build-up, became the guiding, and virtually the sole, principle of our strategy in TUNISIA.

THE BATTLE OF SUPPLY

My first concern came thus to be to straighten out the partial dislocation of bases and lines of communication, which had developed as the inevitable result of the improvisations and emergency measures of the first weeks of the campaign. It was essential that all lines of communication--by air, rail and sea--should be geared up to their maximum capacity, and for this purpose the supply lines for First Army, XII Air Force and United States II Corps, respectively, were separated in so far as possible. First Army was based on BONE with rail and road supply through LA GALLE and SOUK AHRAS; XII Air Force was based on PHILIPPEVILLE and was supplied direct by road and rail to the South; and maintenance supplies and build-up for United States II Corps were moved mainly by rail from ORAN and ALGIERS to the newly established Eastern Base Section in the CONSTANTINE area, and thence by the metre gauge railway to advanced depots at TEBESSA and further East.

This system of supply involved diversion of ocean going vessels to new destination ports, and a considerable coastal shipping traffic from ORAN and ALGIERS to the Eastern ports, but it was designed to shorten road hauls and to obtain a maximum useful capacity from the North African railways, because it was overland transportation that remained the chief bottleneck. Our new system also involved a rapid expansion of the British depots in the BONE area, and an equally rapid development of United States ground and air force depots at PHILIPPEVILLE and CONSTANTINE. Nevertheless, the administrative adjustments and reorganization that were required by the new channels of supply were smoothly and rapidly carried out.

The protection of these extended supply lines during the winter months was a heavy burden on our armed forces. It dictated the closest coordination of the three separate services. What is more, the dominant activity in the North African campaign remained amphibious from the beginning to the end, and the modern form of amphibious warfare is essentially three-dimensional, because of its dependence on air power. Moreover, as the Eighth Army pursued the Afrika Korps closer and closer to the borders of TUNISIA, the Middle Eastern and North African Theaters tended to merge. We had, therefore, not only to coordinate the activities of the three services in separate theaters, but also to work for the closest harmony between the theater commanders. It was agreed at the ANFA Conference that when our separate ground forces actually merged they should form the new 18th Army Group under command of General Alexander, and that there should be a similar integration of both the Naval and the Air Commands at the same time; but meantime there was much to be done in the way of maintaining close contact between widely separated forces.

Naval and air forces moved in cooperation in the two-fold task of protecting our own supply routes and of disrupting the enemy's. Day fighter elements of Eastern Air Command had been organized in 242 Group, and were brought up to support for the

First Army; similarly XII Air Support Command was brought up to THELEPTE and YOUK-LES-BAINS airfields for the support of United States II Corps. Bombers from widely scattered bases raided the Axis fields of TUNIS, BIZERTE, LA GOULETTE, and SOUSSE. B-17's, grouped near BISKRA, and mediums based on CONSTANTINE, concentrated primarily on Tunisian targets, but began to range as far as SICILY and SARDINIA in an effort to cut Axis supplylines and to damage Axis bomber bases. Ninth Air Force Bomber Command, advancing behind the Eighth Army, not only struck at Rommel's supply lines directly, but struck far behind at their essential bases in TUNISIA and SICILY. And MALTA's squadrons aided both efforts, striking directly at TRIPOLITANIA and TUNISIA. Also, MALTA-based Beaufighters and Spitfires took a heavy toll of Axis "air trains" flying between SICILY and TUNISIA.

Between the middle of November and the end of December, Bisley bombers had dropped 644 tons of bombs on TUNISIAN targets; and United States Twelfth Air Force bombers in 78 missions had dropped 1300 tons. In the same period the United States Air Force accounted for a total of 109 enemy aircraft destroyed, and 26 probables, at a cost of 70 United States lost or missing, while the R.A.F. destroyed 170 enemy aircraft with 41 probables.

Compared with subsequent developments, all this activity was on a small scale. By the end of December the United States Twelfth Air Force had only two groups of Flying Fortresses, three medium bomber groups, and a few A-20's available in the forward areas; but with all the handicaps of bad ground and atmospheric conditions it steadily increased in strength and inflicted increasing damage on Axis bases and communications. During the first half of January, daily sorties of R.A.F. Spitfires exceeded 100, and thereafter, with the further strengthening of the fighter force, that figure was doubled. At the same time the rate of damage inflicted on enemy aircraft was measurably increased. From November 8th to February 18th, British Eastern Air Command and United States Twelfth Air Force compiled the following score.

	<u>DESTROYED</u>	<u>PROBABLY DESTROYED</u>	<u>DAMAGED</u>
E.A.C.	255	55	160
12TH U.S.A.A.F.	<u>384</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>166</u>
TOTAL	639	182	326

In the equally vital task of maintaining our own supply lines, the airforces not only provided cover for convoys, but, during the worst days of our transport difficulties, provided the large C-47 Troop Carriers to ferry both freight and personnel almost to the front lines. This was done frequently without escort and under conditions that would ordinarily have been considered prohibitive.

Necessarily a large part of the burden of protecting our own supply, and of interfering with that of the enemy, fell on the Naval forces. Contrary to popular impression, it was estimated that 90% of the Axis flow of men and supplies across the Sicilian Narrows was seaborne, as compared with 10% flown in by air, and the Axis seaborne route with constant air cover was much less vulnerable than our extended coastal route between ALGIERS and BONE. Nevertheless, British submarines concentrated in the dangerous approaches to TUNIS and BIZERTE, and "Force Q" cruisers and destroyers made repeated shipping strikes at night from BONE, achieving an early success in the small hours of December 2nd when the Cruisers AURORA, ARGONAUT and SIRIUS, with the destroyers QUENTIN and QUIBERON, sank or set ablaze four supply ships or transports and three enemy destroyers. This success was not repeated, but the continued night patrols of "Force Q" restricted the enemy to daylight passages under air cover, which gave opportunities to our aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm Naval Air Stations

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821, 826 and 828 working from both BONE and MALTA. Although these opportunities were limited at first, they steadily increased with the development of our own air power. Finally, British minelayers undertook the hazardous task of mining the enemy waters, and H.M.S. ABDIEL, between the end of January and April 7th, laid eight minefields in the Sicilian Channel, operating without escort and without the usual navigational aids, in waters that had previously been mined, and that were regularly patrolled by enemy aircraft, submarines, and E-boats. During February, the minelaying program was intensified by the use of Motor Torpedo Boats from BONE carrying a limited number of American mines, which were successfully laid close inshore of BIZERTE.

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The Navy's primary task, however, was to protect General Anderson's supply. Convoys escorted by destroyers and by other naval craft sailed Eastward from ALGIERS to BONE once every 14 days, and every convoy had to be protected from heavy air attacks and sometimes from submarine assault as well. From November 8th to December 31st, 86,053 deadweight tons of cargo were discharged at BONE, as well as 4,491 vehicles and 31,085 personnel; and during the seven weeks from December 13th to February 1st--which was the period of the heaviest air raids and a time when BONE received 2,000 high-explosive bombs--127,600 tons of supplies were discharged, and 4,000 tons of food and petrol were loaded and carried forward in naval landing craft to LA CALLE and TABARCA.

As we dared not risk large personnel ships on this run because of the danger both to troops and ships, we employed four small, fast cross-channel steamers in a hazardous shuttle service between ALGIERS and BONE, saving escort vessels and greatly speeding the turn-around of shipping. QUEEN EMMA, PRINCESS BEATRIX, ROYAL ULSTERMAN, and ROYAL SCOTSMAN, though listed by the Royal Navy simply as "Landing Ships Infantry," became famous for the gallantry of their service. Carrying some 3,300 troops on every trip, these four ships had transported 16,000 men by December 5th, and between December 13th and February 13th they carried another 36,000. Almost always under air attack, and occasionally under attack by U-boats as well, they continued the steady procession of their voyages until late in March when ULSTERMAN and SCOTSMAN returned to ENGLAND. Other small ships distinguished themselves in the transport of oil, tanks, guns, vehicles and military personnel from ORAN to PHILIPPEVILLE and BONE. These ships included the Tank Landing Craft vessels BACHAQUERO, MISOA and TASAJERA, the ferry steamer EMPIRE DACE, and two small merchant tankers, EMPIRE BAIRN and EMPIRE GAWAIN. TASAJERA was damaged by a torpedo from an enemy aircraft on January 17th.

BONE as the nerve center for General Anderson's supply was the main point of Axis air attack. Throughout November and December there were almost daily attacks; and on January 1st there was a concentrated daylight raid in which the cruiser AJAX was seriously damaged, and in which three merchant vessels were hit, though the damage to one of the latter was superficial. The next day the enemy, in another daylight raid near-missed the AJAX, without causing further damage, but struck four merchant vessels, setting them afire and completely destroying two. The minesweeper ALARM had her back broken and had to be beached. The situation was so serious that Admiral Cunningham wired: "Stick it out. I know you are having an unpleasant time, but if our ships withdraw we are playing the enemy's game. Improved defenses are on the way."

By January 15th I was able to report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff at ANFA, that although we had suffered losses at both BOUGIE and BONE, anti-aircraft defenses had been steadily improved by lay-

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ing hands on all available French AA guns, and by bringing night fighters in from the United Kingdom. The passive air defense in the ports had particularly improved. Ships and seamen of the Navy and Merchant Marine, port parties, and docks-operating personnel kept up the essential work of supply under repeated enemy attack.

THE FRENCH SECTOR

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My most serious concern in mid-January was the French. General Giraud had proposed early in December that the French XIX Corps take over the defense of the critical high ridge which forms the Western barrier of the coastal plain of Eastern TUNISIA, and we were happy to have such assistance as this from that corps, not only because our own forces were, at the time, very thin in the forward areas, but because of the inestimable moral value of allotting the French a definite sector of the front. Though it was not safe to employ them in the valleys, where their lack of equipment made them peculiarly vulnerable to the enemy's armor, we hoped they could defend a mountainous region, where armor had less freedom of action.

The massive Eastern Dorsal which begins with DJEBEL MANSOUR, fifteen miles Southwest of PONT DU FAHS, extends due South to PICHON, where an opening via FONDOUK and PICHON provides connection between KAIROUAN in the coastal plain to the East with the OUSSELTIA valley to the West. Thence the dorsal ridge continues South in milder contour to the Southeast corner of TUNISIA, with openings at FAID and MAKNASSY. Here the French were allotted the honor to occupy a sector which was of crucial strategic importance in itself, and one which was the only link between General Anderson's First Army in the North and General Fredendall's United States II Corps which was established toward the South by mid-January.

The centralized control of communications along this extended front was a vital matter, and although technically Allied Force Headquarters had complete executive control, actually British First Army Headquarters alone had the signal communications necessary to control the entire front. I therefore considered placing executive command of the whole TUNISIAN battle area in the hands of the Commander, First Army, only to discover that the French were unwilling to be subordinated to First Army control. Since I was completely dependent on the good will of the French, in order to maintain a secure base in French NORTH AFRICA, I felt bound to take account of their sensibilities, and, as Commander-in-Chief, Allied Force, I took personal command of the battle area with a Command Post in the Forward area at CONSTANTINE, where I could maintain close touch with all commanders and insure coordination of all ground and air forces.

The most dangerous aspect of the French situation was their appalling lack of equipment, which seriously affected both efficiency and morale. They were completely lacking in the types of weapons needed to cope with German armor, and there was little we could do to supply their needs, because of the pressing urgency of our own. Early in December I tried to muster enough anti-tank and light Flak weapons to supply a single French regiment, but I was unable to do even this much for their material and moral support. Obviously we could not supply aircraft, but we did select the twelve best French pilots to fly our own P-40's. Many of the French were poorly trained, and some, who had families resident in the areas of TUNISIA under German control, were of very doubtful reliability. 132 desertions occurred in a single French battalion. The French Generals Barre and Juin cooperated fully with General Anderson and General Fredendall, and in the middle of January both Anderson and Fredendall were prepared to give them the assistance possible to secure and hold firmly the passes through the mountain ridge from

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FONDOUK to DJEBEL FKIRINE, East of DJEBEL MANSOUR, but the strategic situation in this entire area continued to give me grave concern.

Late in December, before the United States II Corps had arrived in the South, we learned that Field Marshal Rommel had an accurate appreciation of our situation. He was still far away, but he was in full retreat from the victorious British Eighth Army, and ever since EL ALAMEIN had developed a tendency "to look over his shoulder"--as our Joint Intelligence Committee remarked--in the direction of TUNISIA. In a captured German document, dated December 16th, we found set forth Field Marshal Rommel's "Appreciation of Situation" which underlined all our weaknesses of communication and supply, stressed the conglomerate nature of our forces by a shrewd observation that such a force "probably lacks cohesion and suffers from the inherent weakness of an Allied Command", and succinctly summarized our problem in the French sector: "Facing GABES and SOUSSE are the elements of three French divisions, all ill equipped and of doubtful morale."

On the basis of these observations, Rommel outlined an ambitious scheme of strategy to capitalize on our weaknesses. He proposed, according to a statement that has been credited to him, to "hold the British Eighth Army in TRIPOLITANIA, using the minimum force possible, and with the balance of my available forces to attack and cut the enemy lines of communication in TUNISIA." He calculated that two divisions could either hold the Eighth Army or delay its progress in a slow withdrawal, covered by liberal fighter cover and by the use of minefields. With the remainder of this force he proposed to advance on the Southern flank of our lines of communications, which he described, correctly enough at that time, as "not well guarded"; and, proceeding via GABES on the coast, he was to strike Northwest into GAFSA and TEBESSA, with his ultimate objective our Mediterranean ports PHILIPPEVILLE and BONE. If successful, his forces would thus have completely isolated the allied forces in TUNISIA.

At ANFA, on January 15th, I discussed the problem of the French sector with the Combined Chiefs of Staff, pointing out that unless the French held firm, a serious situation was likely to develop. The very next day I had to abandon my own plan to cut the enemy's lines of communication at SFAX and thereby to prevent a junction between Rommel and von Arnim. I had done everything in my power to provide assistance to the French, but only the Allied governments could solve the problem of equipment and they, now, in the ANFA Conference, decided directly that a comprehensive program for the equipment of the French Army should be started immediately. A rearmament committee was promptly established, composed of American, British, and French representatives; and a French General proceeded to WASHINGTON to act as a link between the Committee and the American War Department.

The program of entirely re-equipping the French Army was certain to require many months, and it was not likely that the enemy would stay his hand meantime. Even before the ANFA Conference we had a sample of what was in store. On January 2nd, after air bombardment and artillery preparation, the enemy, operating from the KAIROUAN area, attacked the French positions at FONDOUK, in Central TUNISIA, with 25 tanks and with lorry-borne infantry. The French garrison was surrounded and FONDOUK was captured; but, although this action threatened the PICHON gap into the OUSSELTIA valley behind the Eastern Dorsal, the enemy did not exploit his success.

At about the same time, and for about two weeks thereafter, units of the British First Army renewed their activity in the area just North of the French sector. The 6th Armored Division made a reconnaissance in force in the BOU ARADA area in the valley just

Northwest of the French positions on DJEBEL MANSOUR [REDACTED] 45 tanks. Supported by artillery, and encountering little opposition, the First Army units continued such reconnaissance as this between January 12th and January 16th as far North as GOUBELLAT.

ENEMY OFFENSIVES AGAINST THE FRENCH, JANUARY 18th - FEBRUARY 2nd

On January 18th, the enemy struck at the junction point between the British and French sectors in the BOU ARADA - PONT DU FAHS area. At 0800 hours in the morning, an enemy battalion attacked in a South-westerly direction from a point some five miles Northeast of BOU ARADA. Simultaneously about 50 tanks approached BOU ARADA from the East. Both these initial attacks were repulsed, and the enemy withdrew Eastward after sustaining losses to both personnel and tanks. On the same day another attack developed directly to the Southwest from PONT DU FAHA; this was aimed at the gap between DJEBEL MANSOUR to the West, and the high mountain mass at the Northern end of the Eastern Dorsal. Once through the gap and past the reservoir, OUED KEBIR, the attack could flow Southwest of the Western Dorsal through the valley to ROBAA, and thus isolate the French positions of DJEBEL CHIRICH and DJEBEL FKIRINE, in the mountainous area to the East. By 0400 hours on January 19th, the attack had broken into the French positions, and had advanced to a point about a mile Southwest of the reservoir OUED KEBIR. The French in recoiling from the attack were falling back to a line AG EL KSEUB - OUM EL ABOUB - DJEBEL SI SALEM - DJEBEL MANSOUR.

North of DJEBEL MANSOUR, in the BOU ARADA area -- the original area of the attack--the British 6th Armored Division regrouped during January 18th and the following night, and detached one squadron of tanks and some artillery for support of the French. A battalion of the 1st Guards Brigade had already moved into the area. Meantime, at the request of General Juin, who had joined General Barre's Headquarters, an American reserve force had been provided at MAKTAR, Southwest of ROBAA, on the threatened line of attack, and Brigadier General Paul H. Robinett had moved up from SBEITLA in South Central TUNISIA with Combat Command "B".

On the morning of January 19th, the British 38th Infantry Brigade, supported by one Armored Regiment, attacked on the flank of the enemy drive, clearing the North-South road from BOU ARADA to GOUBELLAT; and the 6th Armored Division advanced to MACRA, 9 miles east of BOU ARADA, on the road to the enemy's base of operations at PONT DU FAHS. From MACRA our artillery dominated the enemy lines of communication on the Southwest road from PONT DU FAHS toward ROBAA.

Nevertheless, the enemy drive from PONT DU FAHS penetrated far down the valley and succeeded in joining two separate columns of tanks and lorry-borne infantry at ROBAA. Juin withdrew Westward to a line DJEBEL HALFA - SILIANA, and the British V Corps to the North conformed by withdrawing its right flank Westward, south of the high ground between BOU ARADA and EL AROUSSA.

On the afternoon of January 20th, another major attack developed in the central mountainous sector where the Eastern and the Western Dorsal join. In the region the dominating feature, DJEBEL CHIRICH, controls the entrance to the OUSSELTIA valley, which also runs South and Southwest between the Eastern and Western Dorsal, parallel to the valley where the enemy controlled ROBAA. The assault captured DJEBEL CHIRICH, and was followed up by an advance of 3,000 infantry, supported by tanks, down the valley, isolating the French positions in the Eastern Dorsal. In the valley the enemy turned one of the main French

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positions at AUZOUSSE, 12 miles Northeast of OUSSELTIA, and during that night reached OUSSELTIA itself.

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The situation was somewhat restored by the action of the British V Corps in the ROBAA area, and by the dispatch of General Robinett's force from MAKTAR into the Southern end of the OUSSELTIA valley. Fighting remained fluid throughout January 21st, but the 6th Armored Division of the V Corps inflicted on the enemy heavy losses in both infantry and tanks. During the next day, the 6th Armored was established on the ROBAA-PONT DU FAHS road, and General Robinett was moving up the OUSSELTIA valley. On January 23rd, the isolated French forces on the high ground to the East were able to extricate themselves under cover of Robinett's force and to take up new positions in the hills to the South of the OUSSELTIA-KAIROUAN road. Meantime, two additional American forces were sent forward. On January 24th, Colonel Fechet moved North from MAKTAR with two United States Infantry battalions and one Field Artillery battalion, and on the same day Colonel Stark with a similar force moved to OUSSELTIA to provide a reserve.

Our gathering air forces gained their first extensive experience of air-ground support during this engagement. Although enemy troops and vehicles, in general, were not sufficiently concentrated to provide daylight targets for heavy bombers, there was increased scope for fighter-bomber activity, and from January 18th to the end of the month there were almost daily sorties by escorted Hurricane-bombers which attacked enemy vehicles, positions, and bridges with considerable effect.

By January 25th it became clear that the enemy's attack had spent its force, and during the next day or two, our positions were stabilized. We controlled the entire Southern half of the OUSSELTIA valley in its widest stretches, and our line ran across the valley from DJEBEL RIHAN, about seven miles due East of OUSSELTIA, in a Northwesterly direction to DRET EL AGRAINE, at the edge of the Western Dorsal. The enemy still controlled the high ground which dominates the Northern half of the valley.

I anticipated further attacks. We estimated that, despite the success of our naval and air attacks on enemy shipping at sea and in the harbors, the Axis was still getting 75 per cent of its requirements into TUNISIA, and we were shortly to encounter in FAID Pass the 21st Panzer Division, which, according to the prisoners we had captured, had been withdrawn from Rommel in TUNISIA and had been at least partially re-equipped at SFAX. I was certain that we would have to face a continuous series of limited attacks, launched by the enemy in order to gain ground to the West, to push us as far as possible from the coastal plain, and to deny to us any possibility of interdicting his vital lines of communication in that region.

Moreover, my worst fears about the stability of the French lines had been realized, and although some French detachments had fought magnificently, the recent operations had proved that the French had neither the equipment nor the morale to stand up to enemy attacks, even in the mountainous terrain where enemy tanks had only limited facility for maneuver. The enemy knew that the soft spots along our front were in the French lines which extended from PICHON, in the center, to FAID, in the South.

I hoped to maintain our present position in TUNISIA, but I frankly faced the possibility that enemy forces might force us back as far as SBEITIA - FERIAANA.

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I made all possible arrangements to meet the situation. Having visited Generals Juin and Anderson I arbitrarily and without consultation with Giraud placed the whole front under Anderson's command. I was determined that if the French would not accept this decision I would act with British and United States troops only. However, when my action was reported to Giraud he made no objection and the arrangement was confirmed in writing on January 27th. The Order established the operational command of the Commander, British First Army, over all United States, British, and French forces in TUNISIA East of the line BONE - CHOTT DJERID. Giraud also agreed to the relief of several French units by British and American forces, and preparations were made to send additional units to the forward areas as rapidly as possible. The United States 9th Infantry Division was to begin its move forward from ORAN about February 1st; we hoped to have the United States 34th Division concentrated in the forward area by February 15th; and the British 25th Armored Brigade Group was to be concentrated similarly by February 28th. Finally, during the month of February, the British 6th Armored Division, which had performed magnificently in the recent fighting, was scheduled to be entirely re-equipped with Sherman tanks. During all this period I continued my frequent trips to the front, or to my own advanced Headquarters then located at CONSTANTINE. The number and complexity of problems at ALGIERS and in the forward areas simply did not permit of divided attention, and I sent several messages urging the early arrival of Alexander to take over the front.

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It was the transportation bottleneck which, as usual, gave us the most difficulty. We stripped the United States 2nd Armored Division and the 3rd Infantry Division of their trucks to provide additional transport; but, although the situation improved daily, it was still a slow business, particularly for the very heavy overland movement of tanks and of other tracked vehicles which the new concentrations in the forward area required. We sent Churchill and Sherman tanks as well as half-tracks forward by rail, but the number of trains each day was limited by a shortage of suitable flat cars and locomotives, and the number of tanks that could be loaded on each flat car was restricted by the heavy grades in the mountain sections, six Churchills or eight Shermans. In all, some 500 tanks--Churchills and Shermans--and 500 half-tracks were moved by rail from CASABLANCA, ORAN, ALGIERS and BONE during February and the early part of March.

Meantime, before any of these moves could be completed, the French sector remained in grave danger; and, as a final precaution, I ordered General Anderson to concentrate some of his mobile forces South of the First Army sector in readiness to counter any enemy move. My aim in this was to assure that the French would not be unsupported in isolated positions.

At 0730 hours on January 30th, the enemy attacked the French forces which held FAID Pass in the Southern sector of the Eastern Dorsal where those forces screened the United States 1st Armored Division in the area SBEITLA - GAFSA to the West. Supported by between 60 and 70 tanks, the enemy force captured FAID by 1900 hours and made further penetrations to the South and West, although the French continued to hold the road junction at SIDI BOU ZID, a few miles West of FAID. Elements of the United States 1st Armored Division at SBEITLA were at once ordered East in support, and the same evening, Combat Command "A" (one battalion of medium tanks, one battalion of infantry, and one battalion of field artillery) and the 26th Combat Team (less two battalions at SBEITLA) were within fifteen miles of SIDI BOU ZID.

Other elements of the 1st Armored Division were ordered to relieve enemy pressure on the French by attacks Eastward from GAFSA; the

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attacks were directed against enemy positions at the Southern extremity of the Eastern Dorsal in the region of MAKNASSY. A small force of armor and infantry attacked SENED STATION on the rail line about half way between GAFSA and MAKNASSY, but they were contained by the enemy there as he had been reinforced. Combat Command "C" moved Northeast to cut the SIDI BOU ZID - MAKNASSY road, and, having reached SIDI BOU ZID on the afternoon of January 31st, turned South towards MAKNASSY.

Although our operations succeeded in holding the enemy from further gains, we were unable to regain the ground that we had lost. Combat Command "A" which attacked FAID on the morning of February 1st, found both the Eastern and Western exits of the pass blocked by tanks and by infantry, as well as by artillery. The enemy's artillery out-ranged our own, and after continued and fruitless attacks the next day, the attack was broken off. On the same day, an armored unit captured SENED, but on February 4th, because of our failure to secure control of the key passes to the East and North, it evacuated its positions about this place and retired to GAFSA.

As a result of the enemy offensives from the middle of January to the early days of February, our entire defensive barrier along the Eastern Dorsal had been seriously weakened, and the arrival of Rommel's forces in Southern TUNISIA made our situation even less secure.

K A S S E R I N E

At dawn on February 14th, the enemy launched a determined attack from FAID in the direction SBEITLA - KASSERINE, and made a subsidiary attack from MAKNASSY to the South. The enemy forces involved in these attacks were about the entire 21st Panzer Division, which had previously been withdrawn from Rommel's forces in TRIPO-LITANIA, and half of the 10th Panzer Division, which, quite recently, had been re-equipped in SFAX. The immediate point of assault was the key road junction at SIDI BOUZID, a few miles due West of FAID, where Combat Command "A" of the United States 1st Armored Division had taken up positions less than two weeks previously after the failure of its efforts to retake FAID Pass from the enemy.

The enemy first overran a battalion of armored artillery on the Eastern slopes of DJEBEL LESSOUDA, near the road junction, five miles Northeast of SIDI BOU ZID, and by 0715 hours had occupied the road junction itself, with a force which included about 20 tanks. At about the same time, our concentrations at SIDI BOU ZID were attacked by dive-bombers. Combat Command "A" counter-attacked enemy forces South of DJEBEL LESSOUDA, and a violent battle of armor continued throughout the morning. After our forces had suffered heavy tank losses they broke off the engagement, and retired to the Southwest.

Throughout the remainder of that day, the strategic highways and junction points in the quadrangle bounded by FAID - MAKNASSY on the East, and SBEITLA - GAFSA on the West, swarmed with German armor and infantry. Additional infantry and tanks poured through the passes and deployed on a line SIDI BOU ZID - SENED. About 50 tanks with infantry flanked DJEBEL LESSOUDA from the North and West, and advanced on SIDI BOU ZID. 16 tanks were reported in the area of SENED far to the South on the route MAKNASSY - GAFSA, and during the day another detachment of 30 tanks was advancing on SIDI BOU ZID from the Southwest. By 1800 hours, this latter force had reached OUED EL FEKKA, almost isolating SIDI BOU ZID. Here some American detachments escaped just in time; also by 1800 hours another detachment of about 20 tanks had advanced due West to within six miles of SBEITLA itself. GAFSA, in the extreme South which was in grave danger of being cut off entirely was evacuated that evening.

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On February 15th, Combat Command "A" and other elements of the 1st Armored Division launched a counterattack from the SBEITLA - HADJEB - EL AOUN area, aimed at SIDI BOU ZID, but they were able only temporarily to stem the German advance, and again only at heavy cost in armored equipment. During the afternoon, a small enemy column entered GAUSA; and during the night of February 15th-16th, our infantry withdrew from DJEBEL LESSOUDA, in the North. It was necessary for them to withdraw in order to escape complete encirclement, and they were obliged to leave the bulk of their transport behind. The 168th Infantry Regiment remained completely isolated on DJEBEL KSAIRA.

During February 16th, confused fighting continued East and Southeast of SBEITLA, and Combat Command "A" suffered further heavy personnel casualties from dive-bombing. By this time the United States II Corps had suffered serious losses in equipment: 98 medium tanks, 57 half-tracks, 12 155 MM guns and 17 105 MM guns. Such losses ruled out the possibility of further counterattacks to hold the enemy, much less to restore our strategic position.

The enemy drive not only isolated GAUSA, which we had evacuated the previous evening, but endangered the position of the French XIX Corps on the Eastern Dorsal, enclosing the OUSSELTIA valley, which was now open to enemy thrust from the South. The Army Commander therefore ordered withdrawal of all our forces to the high ground, beginning with the Western Dorsal at OUSSELTIA, and running South via SBEITLA, KASSERINE, and FERIANA. The withdrawal to the new line was begun that evening, and was successfully completed on the morning of February 19th. The night that the withdrawal began, we sustained a heavy enemy attack by moonlight against our positions at SBEITLA; this attack penetrated as far as the outskirts of the city.

All the attacks on the city were contained during the morning of February 17th, but during the afternoon, the 1st Armored Division withdrew, taking up fresh positions Southeast of TEBESSA. Combat Command "A" moved at this time into the hills to cover the SBIBA gap to the Northeast, on the route SBEITLA - LE KEF. The enemy quickly followed up, occupying SBEITLA, KASSERINE, and THELEPTE by nightfall, and infiltrated into the hills towards KASSERINE pass. Though the loss of THELEPTE air field was a serious matter for us, we had managed to evacuate most of the planes and stores, and what we had not been able to get out we had destroyed before the enemy could lay hands on them.

Enemy concentrations threatened both FERIANA and KASSERINE pass on February 18th, and on the following day the pass Northwest of KASSERINE was attacked by approximately a battalion of infantry. The enemy was held, but on February 20th he renewed his attack and succeeded in capturing the pass. During the same two days we held all attacks on SBIBA.

On February 21st, strong enemy forces debouched from KASSERINE pass in two columns, one of which struck West toward TEBESSA with 20 tanks, and the other of which aimed North at THALA with 40 tanks. Combat Command "B" of the 1st Armored Division contained the TEBESSA thrust, but by evening the other striking force had penetrated to within 10 miles of THALA where it was engaged by artillery of the 26th Armored Brigade from the British 6th Armored Division. The two enemy columns suffered a total loss of 18 tanks as a result of their encounters with Combat Command "B", and with the 26th Armored Brigade, respectively.

By February 22nd, the enemy offensive, having reached its flood tide without having breached the barriers which protected our lines of communication to the North via TEBESSA and THALA - LE KEF, began

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steadily to ebb. The enemy armored thrusts against both TEBESSA and THALA, which were renewed in considerable strength on this day, were held after heavy fighting. Moreover, two British squadrons of Churchill tanks had arrived in the SBIBA area to protect the Northern approach to THALA, and in their first engagement with enemy tanks destroyed four of them for the loss of one. That night, during a successful patrol, Combat Command "B" captured 300 Italian prisoners and quantities of small arms and equipment.

During the early phases of the engagement we had been much hampered by weather conditions which prevented continuous air operations, but during the decisive period of the struggle we were able to strike telling blows with our air power. The brunt of the air defense fell on XII Air Support Command, but other elements of our air forces gave a coordinated support which demonstrated the effectiveness of two newly created organizations, Northwest African Air Force, and Mediterranean Air Command. Indeed, our Air Force was reorganized on February 19th precisely in the midst of the KASSERINE battle, as it will separately be described in the following section of this report, and some of the results of this reorganization were immediately apparent at KASSERINE. For instance, notably at this time, a new Strategic Command of the NAAF and a squadron of Hurricane-bombers reinforced XII Air Support Command, and maintained a steady assault on German Troops, armor, and supply lines; and simultaneously Western Desert Air Force's diversionary attacks in the South pinned down the German Air Force in that area.

★ Early on the morning of February 23rd, the enemy began to withdraw toward KASSERINE under the heavy pressure of our armor which was now strongly supported by air. During that night, the pass was shelled by our 155 MM guns and was bombed by our aircraft. Leading elements of Combat Command "B", and the 26th Armored Brigade, followed up the withdrawal closely; and, by nightfall on February 24th, they were only five miles Northwest of the pass. At dawn the following day, the 16th Regimental Combat Team, supported by a battalion of medium tanks, the 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and two companies of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, launched a successful attack on the pass directly from the West. In proceeding thus these forces established contact with the 26th Armored Brigade. At noon on the 25th, the 26th Armored, followed by Combat Command "B", advanced through the pass. By evening they had reached the outskirts of the city of KASSERINE, on the Northwest. Our forces also at that time advanced South from SBIBA, and operated patrols between ten and fifteen miles South of the town.

Throughout these advances, we encountered mines and demolitions on such a scale as to suggest virtually a new weapon in warfare, and, as a result, our progress was delayed and contact with the enemy lost.

On February 26th, our positions in the KASSERINE pass area were consolidated, and the exacting work of clearing the minefields went on while the enemy withdrew to the general line HADJEB EL AOUN-SIDI BOU ZID - GAFSA.

Whatever Rommel's original intentions may have been, or however much larger scope they may have encompassed as a result of his initial success, he had clearly failed in his objectives, and this in spite of the piecemeal nature of the early resistance offered, particularly on the part of the very considerable armor we had in the affected area. If, as I originally supposed, he aimed merely to push us back from the coastal plain, in order to protect his own lines of communication, his ultimate line was not enough farther advanced beyond his original positions to prove worth the cost, particularly because, instead of facing only our positions, he had to look over his shoulder in another direction and to face the British Eighth Army as it approached

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MARETH. If, after his original break-through, he thought he could exploit as far as LE KEF and seriously threaten our lines of communication, that very quickly proved to be beyond his strength. If he intended merely a spoiling attack to inflict maximum damage on our equipment, he had certainly inflicted serious wounds, without, however affecting our strength more than temporarily. In any event, his sands were running out, and the turn of the tide at KASSERINE proved actually to be the turn of the tide in all of TUNISIA as well.

MEDITERRANEAN AIR COMMAND AND NORTHWEST AFRICAN AIR FORCE

The junction of von Arnim and Rommel, and the approach of the British Eighth Army to the MARETH Line, fused two separate theaters of war into one; and it imposed upon me the necessity of carrying through an extensive reorganization to achieve a unified command in our land, sea, and air forces. In January, the ANFA Conference had agreed that such a reorganization as I have just mentioned should take place once this stage of the campaign had been reached, and all the necessary preparations had been made meantime.

The first of the reorganizations to become effective was that of the air forces, with the creation of Mediterranean Air Command on February 19th, under Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur W. Tedder. Air Vice Marshal H.E.P. Wigglesworth was named as Deputy under Air Chief Marshal Tedder, and Brigadier General Howard A. Craig as Chief of Staff. The new air command established a unified control over all Allied Air Forces -- French, British and American -- that were based in the MIDDLE EAST, NORTHWEST AFRICA, and MALTA; and it proved an effective instrument for planning, and for the coordination with a minimum of delay of large-scale operations in widely separated areas. The organization of MIDDLE EAST command remained, but MALTA was detached from its jurisdiction, and assigned directly to the new Air Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean.

Under MAC the Northwest African Air Force was formed to unify the diverse activities of the various elements comprising within the combat area Western Desert Air Force of the Middle East, the British Eastern Air Command, and the United States Twelfth Air Force. Its primary task was to drive the enemy air force from the sky, and then to attack his land and sea forces. Lieutenant General Carl Spaatz was established as commander with his headquarters at CONSTANTINE, and Air Vice Marshall J.M. Robb was appointed as his Deputy.

NAAF was composed of three separate combat elements--Strategic Air Force, Tactical Air Force, and Coastal Air Force. General Doolittle, of Strategic Air Force, commanded the heavy and medium bombers whose special mission was the destruction of strategic targets--enemy naval and air bases, communications and convoys. Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham commanded Tactical Air Force, consisting of fighter, fighter-bomber, light bomber and reconnaissance squadrons, and assembled from 242 Group, XII Air Support Command, Tactical Bomber Force and Western Desert Air Force. His particular mission was the close support of ground troops. Finally, Air Vice Marshal Sir Hugh P. Lloyd commanded the new Coastal Air Force, composed of XII Fighter Command, and of certain RAF elements from Eastern Air Command with the task of defending our ports and convoys, of conducting continual reconnaissance, and of carrying out both shipping sweeps and anti-submarine patrols.

NAAF maintained additional formations whose functions, though less dramatic, were no less important, because they provided the essential services which enabled the combat formations to perform their missions. Photographic Reconnaissance Wing assembled invaluable data for the guidance of both the Strategic and the Tactical

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forces; Training Command applied the final edge of keenness to crews before they undertook combat missions; and Troop Carrier Command not merely ferried freight and essential supplies, but directly entered combat service in towing gliders and carrying airborne troops and paratroopers. Finally, Air Service Command administered the vast organization of service and supply, including all essential materials for the service and equipment of aircraft, and for the construction and maintenance of airfields.

The new administrative and operational organization successfully solved one of the basic problems of modern warfare--how to apply air power most effectively to the support of land operations. Direct support of ground troops is naturally the method preferred by the immediate military commander concerned, but this needs to be supplemented by assaults on the enemy's bases, on his lines of communications, and on his factories, which are beyond the immediate range of the local commander's vision.

The problem in a given operation is further complicated by the competing demands of individual commanders on a far-flung battle front, each of whom would naturally like to have at his disposal some segment of the air forces for his own exclusive use. To a large extent in our experience the creation of separate Strategic and Tactical forces resolved the conflict between the immediate needs of the commander for direct air support, and the equally compelling necessity of knocking out the enemy's war potential far behind the lines; but, perhaps, the greatest advantage of our new organization was its flexibility. Aircraft of the different combat formations could be fused in a single mission as the need arose, and as a result the local commander had for direct support the combined weight of the Strategic and Tactical forces when he most needed it.

Whereas the Strategic and Tactical commands coordinated their missions primarily with the operations of ground forces, Coastal Air Force maintained close ties with the Navy in the Western Mediterranean. It controlled air defense, sea-air reconnaissance, anti-submarine air operations, protection of shipping against air attack, coastal shipping strikes, and air-sea rescue. A joint Navy-Coastal Operations Room was established in ALGIERS; and there were coordinated here the activities of Coastal and Naval patrols, and of anti-submarine and reconnaissance activities. Our Navy-Coastal organization frequently called on the Strategic Command for bombers to attack enemy convoys, and Strategic Command also cooperated in the protection of our own convoys by its attacks on enemy ports and airfields; but, for the most part, Navy and Coastal utilized their own forces. Torpedo-carrying Beaufighters attacked submarines; and every sector of the coast maintained its day and night fighter forces for the protection of Allied convoys. Coastal and Navy fighters together ruled the Western Mediterranean.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MEDITERRANEAN

On February 20, the day following the creation of Mediterranean Air Command and Northwest African Air Force, I announced similar changes in the organization of naval command in the Mediterranean, in order to achieve a greater concentration of authority. Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew B. Cunningham became Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean.

The title itself was traditional, but the actual character of the command had altered with the turn of the tide of war in the Mediterranean. Until four months prior to the North African landings, Admiral Cunningham had been Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, control-

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ling only the Eastern half of the Mediterranean, and at the time it had been a common saying that the slender force of cruisers and destroyers based on ALEXANDRIA maintained their precarious hold against the vastly superior potential of the Italian fleet, solely by virtue of the indomitable will and prestige of the Admiral. In July, 1942, Admiral Cunningham relinquished his post to Admiral Sir Henry H. Harwood, and proceeded to WASHINGTON where he participated in the planning of the TORCH operation which was to alter the balance of power in the Mediterranean. On January 21st, 1943, he was promoted from the rank of Admiral to be Admiral of the Fleet, and when a month later, he resumed the traditional title of Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, it was to confirm and to extend his authority over what had become the decisive theater of operation.

Admiral Cunningham retained command of the original TORCH area which was now extended Eastward to a line drawn from the TUNISIAN-TRIPOLITANIAN boundary to Latitude 35° North - Longitude 16° East, and thence to CAPE SPARTIVENTO in Italy. Admiral Harwood relinquished his title as Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, to assume that of Commander-in-Chief, Levant, the new designation for his existing command in the Eastern Mediterranean. It required no explicit directive to ensure complete harmony between the two commands in all matters relating to the coordination of naval movements and to the distribution of naval forces between them.

Within the new boundaries of Admiral Cunningham's immediate command lay MALTA, which had survived two years of incessant Axis air attack from Sicilian bases, less than 60 miles away, and which was now to become an increasingly effective naval and air base for offensive action during the TUNISIAN campaign. The services of MALTA's air forces in striking at Axis communications were matched by the attacks of MALTA's destroyers and of the 10th Submarine Flotilla upon the enemy's shipping. Just as the demands of the new strategic situation created by the junction of Rommel and von Arnim, and by the arrival of the Eighth Army at the MARETH Line, dictated the subordination of MALTA's air command to the supreme direction of Mediterranean Air Command, so it was sound principle to transfer MALTA's naval command from the jurisdiction of Commander-in-Chief, Levant, to that of Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean.

MALTA's fighting forces thus became part of the vast Allied Force in the Western Mediterranean, but we were not yet in a position to supply these forces nor to supply the gallant population who served the needs of the forces. So long as the Axis could maintain its air strength over "Bomb Alley" in the Sicilian Narrows, we could scarcely risk the attempt to send convoys through from the Western Mediterranean. Although we had a battle fleet based on GIBRALTAR, which might have been used for their escort, we kept the battleships and aircraft carrier of Force "H" chiefly at GIBRALTAR and ORAN, with frequent sweeps towards the BALLEARICS and an occasional visit to ALGIERS, because we did not intend to risk them in the narrow seas in range of land-based aircraft, unless there was a prospect of contact with the Italian battlefleet--a prospect which we knew the Italians were disinclined to face.

Under these circumstances, it was agreed that the supply of MALTA should continue to be the responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief, Levant. During March two convoys that reached MALTA from ALEXANDRIA, unloaded 28,000 tons of general cargo and 7,600 tons of furnace fuel; and the Levant convoys continued to supply MALTA during April, until all available destroyers were mustered to throw a cordon round the Axis forces trapped on the CAP BON peninsula.

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EIGHTEENTH ARMY GROUP

The outlines of a new military command for the coordination of the group of armies and corps which were finally to close the ring in TUNISIA had been sketched out a month earlier, and had been approved by the ANFA Conference. General the Honorable Sir Harold R. L. G. Alexander, Commander-in-Chief MIDDLE EAST, and I maintained close contact as the British Eighth Army pursued Rommel through TRIPOLITANIA, and we were agreed that at a time to be determined after the Eighth Army had crossed the TUNISIAN border, it should pass from MIDDLE EAST command to the Allied Force under my command; that General Alexander should become my deputy; and that his primary task should be directly to command the Allied Force on the TUNISIAN front, with the assistance of a small headquarters staff of his own, provided from MIDDLE EAST. Thus on February 20th, General Alexander became Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Allied Force, and Commander-in-Chief, 18th Army Group, composed of the British First and Eighth Armies, the United States II Corps, and the French XIX Corps.

The reorganization which resulted from the formation of the 18th Army Group made little difference to the system of supply, or to the basic distribution of responsibility for supply maintenance, because, in conformity with the arrangements that had been sketched out in January, the MIDDLE EAST command continued to be responsible for the supply of the British Eighth Army. The new Army Group organization did, however, greatly facilitate the operational control of the two supply channels and permitted at a high level the establishment of priorities to correspond with the operational situation. Army Group Headquarters included a small administrative staff, with no executive authority, but with advisory functions of the utmost importance. It advised the Commander-in-Chief, 18th Army Group, on logistical factors affecting his operational plans; and it interpreted his decisions, insofar as they affected supply, to the executive authorities at Allied Force Headquarters, and to the Commanding General, Services of Supply. This improved coordination and control gave that greater flexibility to the supply system which later proved invaluable in facilitating the rapid transfer of formations inside the British First Army, and from the Eighth Army to the First Army.

Meantime the most immediate task confronting General Alexander was the reorganization of the elements composing his new command. Hitherto our units had of necessity been sent forward piecemeal to take position in a shifting front, and the resulting confusion had been increased by the hasty improvisation of ad hoc battle groups to meet the demands of a rapidly changing situation. Under the circumstances it had been impossible to avoid the separation of units from their parent commands, and troops of all three nationalities had become intermingled. General Alexander's first order regrouped the TUNISIAN forces and returned detached brigades, regiments, and combat teams to their original formations. He divided the battle area into three national sectors: into those of the British First Army in the North; of the French XIX Corps in the center; and the United States II Corps towards the South. The British Eighth Army remained an advancing force in the zone of operations to the Southeast. At the same time, General Alexander made provision for a general reserve to be administered by the newly arrived British IX Corps Headquarters with Lieutenant General J. T. Crocker in command. The composition of the reserve changed considerably under the pressure of later events.

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CONCLUDING PHASES

The effectiveness of our reorganization was at once put to the test by a carefully coordinated Axis strategy which was designed to prevent the development of our own. The Axis held a strong defensive barrier, with all the advantage of interior lines of communication, from the MARETH Line in the South along the Eastern Dorsal Northward to the dominating features which controlled entrance to the plains of TUNIS and BIZERTE. So long as the British Eighth Army remained halted East of the MARETH Line, our forces could not close the ring, and it was obviously the enemy's purpose to keep it open by a series of attacks at the Northern and Southern ends of the line, and so to defeat our forces in detail.

KASSERINE had been a foretaste of what was to come, and certainly one of its purposes had been to keep the Eighth Army isolated in front of the MARETH Line. Although Rommel had withdrawn Eastward from KASSERINE by February 25th, he still held the Eastern Dorsal which effectively barred our access to the coastal plain, and he had sent the 21st Panzer Division, and half of the 10th Panzer Division, to the GABES-MARETH area to prepare his attack on the Eighth Army. On the day following the KASSERINE withdrawal von Arnim launched a powerful diversionary attack on the British Corps sector in the North, timing the attack to catch our newly coordinated forces in the midst of the regrouping ordered by General Alexander as Commander of 18th Army Group. British V Corps had just been weakened by the sorting out of American units to be sent to the Southern sector of the front, and the British First Army had had to improvise "Y Divisions" to hold the BOU ARADA sector in the threatened area.

The objectives of the offensive were MEDJEZ EL BAB and BEJA, the former our chief offensive outpost in the MEDJERDA Valley, and the latter our most important communication center in that area. Both BEJA and MEDJES EL BAB held, but by the middle of March Axis forces had made penetrations both North and South which left MEDJEZ EL BAB in a dangerously exposed salient. In the North the enemy captured SEDJENANE, and was stopped only at DJEBEL ABIOD; south of MEDJEZ, although BOU ARADA held, he penetrated to the vicinity of EL AROUSSA.

During this crisis the new organization of the air forces proved its worth. The weather was still rainy, and the Germans still held the advantage of nearby all-weather airfields. Their dive-bombers were an important factor in the isolation and virtual extinction of the 2nd/5th Sherwood Foresters in the vicinity of DJEBEL ABIOD on March 17th. But 242 Group of Tactical Air Force extended itself to the utmost to strafe any moving target and carried out nearly 4000 sorties during the period.

On March 28th the British 46th Division counter-attacked, recapturing SEDJENANE on March 30th and penetrating rapidly beyond to CAP SERRAT. The enemy had already withdrawn from the EL AROUSSA area under attack by the British 1st Guards Brigade, and by a flying column from the 78th Divisions; and, by the end of the month, the situation in the North had been restored. The offensive had gained von Arnim only limited and temporary successes at excessive cost in armor--about 30 tanks-- at a time when his available supply had already been curtailed in order to supply Rommel in the South.

On March 6th, at the height of von Arnim's diversion, Rommel launched an assault in force on MEDENINE, about 20 miles South of MARETH. Rommel, addressing his troops on this occasion before the

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battle, told them that its outcome would determine whether the Afrika Korps could retain TUNISIAN bridgehead. By the evening of March 7th his attack had been crushed by the Eighth Army which destroyed 52 of his tanks while losing none of its own.

By the middle of March the Axis had definitely lost the initiative in TUNISIA. Not only had the offensive in the North and in the South proved costly and fruitless, but they had thinned out the enemy forces in the center. Early in March patrols of the United States 34th Division, pushing East from the region of SBIBA, discovered that the PICHON gap in the Eastern Dorsal was lightly held, and on March 5th a strong reconnaissance force with some tanks occupied the town temporarily. Although this force subsequently withdrew under pressure of Axis forces that were holding the heights North and South of the gap, it was not long before the United States II Corps was ready to exploit enemy weakness at the Southern extremity of the Dorsal, where Rommel was relying mainly on the Italian Centaure Division for the defense of the GAFSA area.

The United States II Corps' attack was in accord with General Alexander's strategy to prepare the way for General Montgomery's assault, with the Eighth Army, upon the MARETH Line, and it marked the beginning of a series of highly coordinated offensives designed to extinguish the Axis bridgehead in TUNISIA. To Major General George S. Patton, Jr., as II Corps Commander, was assigned the mission of operating against the right flank and against the lines of communication of the Axis forces in Southern TUNISIA. It was his purpose to draw off Rommel's reserves from the MARETH Line, and to secure advanced airfields from which to maintain strong air support over the MARETH - GABES area.

Reserve supplies, accumulated during January for the SFAX project, which never materialized, had been steadily augmented during February and March for the support of United States II Corps, and the capacity of the entire transport system serving the area had meantime been greatly increased. The United States 727th Railroad Operating Battalion took over management of the Narrow gauge railway, and the import of United States locomotives and rolling stock made intensive operation possible. At the same time II Corps had been provided with increased resources in truck battalions. Thus, logistical support of General Patton's offensive was much better provided for than had been the case in our original SFAX project. It was an important part of the United States II Corps mission that it should set up out of its own resources a forward maintenance center for the supply of the Eighth Army's mobile forces when they had breached the MARETH Line.

On March 17th the attack began, and by March 23rd United States II Corps had occupied GAFSA, EL GUETTAR and MAKNASSY, advancing to a line that was 10 miles South of BOU HAMRAN. Here enemy resistance stiffened, making further progress impossible without considerable reinforcement, and on this line the Corps front stabilized. But in the last ten days of March this pressure on Rommel's flank was reinforced by the Eastward push of the French Southern Algerian Force along the Southern edge of the GHOTT DJERID and thereupon the enemy was cleared from the region of NEFZOUA, East of the large CHOTT, and was expelled from the towns of SABRIA, DOUZ, and KEBILL, on the road to GABES.

All elements of the new Northwest African Air Force participated in the developing Allied offensive. [REDACTED] Support Command helped clear the way for the capture of GAFSA on [REDACTED] March 17th; on the 19th

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Tactical Bomber Force attached Axis airfields at TEBAGA and GABES; and Strategic Air Force delivered maximum weight attacks during the following two days. At the same time practically all the fighter and fighter-bomber squadrons and a light bomber wing of Western Desert Air Force--now part of Tactical Air Force--moved up in close support of the Eighth Army in the MEDENTINE - BEN GARDANE area. Indeed, some of the fighter-bomber squadrons were based within 12 miles of the front line. When Montgomery began his offensive against the MARETH Line on the night of March 20th - 21st, the object of interdicting use of the air to the enemy had been almost completely achieved.

After ten days of powerful frontal assaults and after a brilliant outflanking maneuver that was executed by the New Zealand Corps--in all of which our forces were covered by overwhelming air support--the MARETH positions were breached and turned. By March 30th advance units from both the main body of the Eighth Army, and from the New Zealand Corps joined forces North of GABES, and reports from air reconnaissance and from ground patrols indicated that Rommel was hastily preparing a new line of defense from the coast along the swollen WADI AKARIT Westward to the hills of DJEBEL ZEMLET EL BEIDA. Here the Afrika Korps was confined to its narrowest front, and its right flank was threatened by the United States II Corps positions at MAKNASSY, EL GUETTAR, and GAFSA.

As the ring began to close, General Alexander was able to coordinate the attacks of the British Eighth and First Armies, and of the United States II Corps ever more closely. On April 6th, the Eighth Army forced the AKARIT positions, and Rommel's forces withdrew Northward that night, abandoning much equipment and many prisoners. In the afternoon of the same day, forward patrols of the Eighth Army and of the United States II Corps joined in the region of OUED EL ZITOUN, and a complete collapse of the AKARIT line forced the withdrawal of Axis forces facing the United States II Corps positions near EL GUETTAR and MAKNASSY.

On April 7th General Alexander ordered British First Army's IX Corps--to which he attached the United States 34th Infantry Division--to clear the FONDOUK gap in the Eastern Dorsal, and to capture KAIROUAN, the main communications center in the bulge of the coastal plain. He hoped in this way to cut Rommel's line of retreat. The IX Corps attacked on April 8th; and, on the morning of April 11th, after it had engaged in a series of heavy battles some of which involved both infantry and armor, some of its advance units entered KAIROUAN. Here they made junction on the same day with the X corps from Eighth Army, which, of course, was advancing from the South.

Rommel for all his losses had not yet been trapped. A handicap in this action was the lack of troops on the part of the 34th Division. It had been used steadily, for many weeks, in small detachments guarding the lines of communication. Nevertheless, being the only United States troops at hand, it was used in the hope of assisting to make a quick break-through.

In the pursuit up the coast, land, sea, and air elements combined in driving the enemy from his ports and airdromes. By April 7th he had lost most of his forward airdromes, and on April 10th combined air and ground attack drove him from the port of SFAX, which had been badly damaged by our own attacks, and which had had its channel completely blocked. In a short time the port was sufficiently repaired to admit Tank Landing Craft. And by April 13th, it was en-

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tirely clear. The first convoy from TRIPOLI arrived the next day with supplies for the Eighth Army, and by the end of the month, in SFAX, more than 14,000 tons of cargo had been discharged. At SOUSSE which was occupied on April 12th, port facilities were less seriously damaged, although the harbor was congested with sunken wrecks and though the entrance was partly blocked. During the next ten days (April 12- 22nd) SOUSSE was prepared as an advance striking base for motor torpedo boats, and by April 28th these "Light Coastal Craft" made their first daylight sweep of the TUNISIAN coast, attacking minesweepers, destroyers, and a merchantman, as well as aircraft on the beaches. Admiral Cunningham sent them a message praising the "excellent work of the Coastal Forces" and assuring them that they were "contributing greatly to the difficulties of the enemy and to the advance of our armies in TUNISIA."

During this same period, as the Axis made increasing efforts to reinforce its weakening garrison in TUNISIA, the air war against enemy communications and supply became systematic and devastating. Already in that time, according to a February report of Brigadier General Barwell R. Legge, the United States Military Attache in BERN, conservative elements of the German General Staff regarded the German "investment" in the TUNISIAN bridgehead as excessive; but a determination to hold it led to increasing commitments during the next two months. After Rommel's retreat from the MARETH Line, the Axis air transport shuttle service to TUNISIA reached its height, rising from an average of a little over 100 sorties per day to a peak of nearly 250. But Strategic Air Force directly devised the "Flax" plan for its suppression; and between April 5th and April 22nd the details of the plan were carried out with precision by Strategic and Tactical combined. Simultaneously, bombing attacks were made on the main transport landing grounds in SICILY, ITALY and NORTH AFRICA. P-38 fighter sweeps were made in the Sicilian Straits to catch transports in transit, and Spitfire and P-40 sweeps were made over the landing areas to shoot down any craft which got through, and to protect both P-38's and Strategic bombers by pinning hostile fighters to the ground. In a single afternoon, on April 18th, 100 JU-52's, heavily escorted by fighters, were intercepted, and 73 of the transports with many of the fighters, were shot down, others crashing on the beach of CAP BOW. For the entire period 432 enemy aircraft were destroyed for a loss of about 35 of our own. After April 22nd Axis air transports were restricted to night flights, and the German Air Force began to withdraw its combat planes to SICILY. In truth, from this time Axis air power ceased to play any serious role in the TUNISIAN campaign.

The Axis had withdrawn within its final ring of defense, enclosing the remnants of its bridgehead--TUNIS, BIZERTE, and the CAP BON peninsula. It was a strong defensive arc which curved from ENFIDAVILLE on the coast South of CAP BON Westward to DJEBEL FKIRINE and DJEBEL MANSOUR, by the Northern bastion of the Eastern Dorsal, and thence Northward via the dominating features which protect the TUNISIAN plain, to the coast West of BIZERTE.

Meantime the rapid movement of our armies and the resulting contraction of the front presented 18th Army Group with major problems of administration and supply. The British Eighth Army's advance to ENFIDAVILLE had placed a considerable strain on its supply system, which depended mainly upon truck transport over very difficult roads and tracks from the Army's base at TRIPOLI. This strain was relieved by a temporary diversion of supplies from the

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British First Army. A development of the North African lines of communication, resulting from the improved equipment and operation of ports and railways, permitted the establishment at the SBEITLA railhead in Central TUNISIA of special reserves from First Army stocks for Eighth Army to draw upon. Later, in April, when the Eighth Army had replenished the SBEITLA depot from its own reserves, it repaid this assistance by the transfer by rail of 25-pounder ammunition to meet a threatened shortage in the First Army area during the early stages of the final offensive.

At the same time, Eighth Army's advance through the elimination of the entire Southern sector of the front, permitted the transfer of United States II Corps to another area; and General Alexander proposed to place part of it in the coastal sector on the left flank of British V Corps. I agreed but stipulated that the whole corps of four divisions must be used in its own sector on the North. The largest issues were involved, some of them extending beyond the limits of our own theatre. Alexander heartily agreed. The transfer required a road movement of major scale through and across the British First Army rear area and across its lines of communication, where the few usable roads were both narrow and mountainous. This elaborate movement was executed with notable precision and speed without interrupting the unit and supply movements of British First Army; and it reflected the greatest credit on the efficiency of the staffs of the formations involved, and on British traffic control in the First Army area. Administratively, the transfer required the entire reorganization of II Corps supply lines, which had previously run from the Eastern Base Section at CONSTANTINE by road and rail to TEBESSA. II Corps was now dependent on the British base at BONE. Accordingly, Eastern Base Section hastily established here United States depots for stocks that were to be brought by road and rail from TEBESSA and CONSTANTINE, and for shipping that was to be diverted from other ports than that of BONE. The new supply system for II Corps was successfully established on very short notice, and the only remaining problem to be solved was the extension of the supply line to keep pace with the rapidity of II Corps' final advance on BIZERTE.

The preparations for the final offensive included the building up, at and Eastward from BONE and SOUK EL ARBA, of a full scale of reserve supplies for all our units. This build-up had begun early in March after the completion of supply preparations had been made for the United States II Corps' attack towards GAFSA. And priorities that were established by 18th Army Group determined then the direction and duration of the flow of the build-up in supplies. Finally, in this time, the surplus port and rail capacity that was available, after the day-to-day maintenance requirements of the United States ground and air forces had been met, was allocated to the First Army build-up.

Towards the end of March, the flow of supplies was diverted to the establishments and stocking of the new base depots for the United States II Corps in the BONE area. This was done as a safeguard in the event the rapidity of the advance of the Allied forces and of the collapse of German resistance produced problems arising not from any shortage of reserves on the ground in the Army areas, but from the distance between Army and Corps dumps and the front line troops. The wide distribution of reserve supplies led on occasion to shortages of particular items, though ample stocks were available in the area. In spite of the complications arising from the transfer

of the United States II Corps, and later from the transfer of divisions from the Eighth to the First Army, we had by now attained the flexibility which comes from adequacy of logistical resources, and General Alexander was able to undertake the final offensive with confidence in the soundness of the logistical position of the forces that were engaged.

On April 16th General Alexander ordered that there was to begin on April 22nd, a renewal of the general offensive. By April 18th the United States II Corps held positions North of the line OUED SARGA - DJEBEL LANSERINE - TEBOURBA, and to it he assigned the mission of driving on BIZERTE by way of the SEDJENANE - JEFNA and OUED SEDJENANE valleys. At the same time the British First Army's V Corps and IX Corps, on the right, were to drive toward TUNIS--the former along the line MEDJEZ EL BAB - SIDI MEDIEN, the latter across the GOUBELLAT Plain and Northward to MASSICAULT--and the French XIX Corps was to advance from the DJEBEL FKIRINE--DJEBEL MANSOUR area through PONT ENFIDAVILLE itself on April 19th, enemy positions were still so strong in that sector as to make a major break-through there less likely.

The first phase of the final offensive ended on April 30th, with substantial gains in the First Army Sector. Although IX Corps fell short of its ultimate objectives, it gained important positions in the area North of BOU ARADA and uncovered the right flank of Axis forces facing French XIX Corps which promptly pushed forward eighteen miles to PONT DU FAHS, even occupying that place temporarily. Moreover, IX Corps destroyed so much enemy armor that his tank action had to be broken off on both the IX Corps and the V Corps fronts. V Corps, meantime, cleared an arc East of MEDJEZ--including the important feature of DJEBEL AHMERA, famous as "Longstep Hill"--and gained room for the deployment of armored forces East of the MEDJERDA river. And the advance of United States II Corps brought it to within fifteen miles of MATEUR, after it had stormed the mountain fortress of DJEBEL TAHENT, better known as "Hill 609".

By April 30th Eighth Army had made little or no progress, and on that date General Alexander decided that in view of the formidable character of the terrain and of the defenses facing it, and in the light of First Army's gains, the major offensive effort should be made in the First Army sector. On May 3rd he issued orders which modified his original plan by assigning to the First Army the major offensive role, and by transferring to it some of the elements which had been fighting with the Eighth Army--7th Armored Division, 4th Indian Division, and 201st Guards Brigade. Eighth Army was to maintain maximum pressure, meantime, in order to prevent the transfer of Axis forces to threatened parts of the line, and to prevent their retirement into the CAP BON peninsula.

The assault succeeded everywhere and a decisive break-through was accomplished with astonishing speed. On May 5th, V Corps captured DJEBEL BOU AOUKAZ, which dominated the TUNISIAN Plain. United States II Corps and British First Army's IX Corps attacks began at dawn on May 6th, and by the afternoon of May 7th units of the former entered BIZERTE, and units of the latter entered TUNIS. The drives were prepared and supported by the unopposed air power of NAAF. The night before the attack, enemy defenses were softened by the attacks of Tactical Air Force. During the attack this force laid a creeping barrage in front of the advancing army. The assignment of a Group of Wellington night bombers to Tactical permitted a systematic 24-hour support which counted 2154 sorties on May 6th alone.

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Capture of TUNIS and BIZERTE split the Axis defenders and compelled the capitulation of the 10th and 15th Panzer Divisions--with some other units--whose commander surrendered to Major General Omar N. Bradley, United States II Corps Commander, on May 10th. Some units of the British First Army, meantime, turned their attention to the Axis forces confronting the Eighth Army. While the 7th Armored Division wheeled North from TUNIS to make contact with United States II Corps, and to complete the bag of Axis forces in that area, the 6th Armored turned South to cut off the enemy's line of retreat to the CAP BON peninsula. On May 10th, it broke through at HAMMAN LIF, and combined with the 4th Indian Division, the 1st Infantry Division, the left wing of French XIX Corps, and with the Eighth Army in completing the encirclement of the only remaining Axis force of any size.

On May 11th, General Mathenet, Commander of the French Moroccan Division, had the satisfaction of receiving the surrender of the German Divisional Commander in his sector, and on the day following Colonel-General von Arnim was captured by the 4th Indian Division, and was taken to General Anderson's headquarters. Meantime, the British 4th Division encircled the CAP BON peninsula, while Tactical Air force ranged the area to strafe the beaches and to bomb the interior. On May 13th the last organized resistance ended with the surrender of the Italian Field Marshal Messe, commanding the last remnant of Axis forces in TUNISIA.

RETRIBUTION

From the moment the enemy's defenses covering TUNIS and BIZERTE were broken, he was faced with two alternatives--to surrender or to attempt evacuation. To counter the second, if it should be his choice, the Navy had drawn up a plan, in close collaboration with the Air Forces. With a grim glance back at NORWAY, DUNKIRK, GREECE and CRETE, it was named "OPERATION RETRIBUTION". At the first sign of evacuation all available cruisers, destroyers, minesweepers and coastal forces of the Mediterranean and Levant Fleets were to concentrate at BONE and MALTA, ready to maintain continuous patrols in exactly defined areas on the escape routes to SICILY and PANTELLERIA; movements of convoys were to be restricted to release escort ships; and the battleships NELSON and RODNEY, and the aircraft carrier FORMIDABLE, with their destroyer escorts, were to be sailed to ALGIERS.

It was certain that an organized evacuation could only be attempted under cover of the Italian Fleet, which would at long last be compelled to stand and fight. In spite of odds of five to two against us in battleship strength, the Navy was ready and eager to give battle.

On the night of May 3rd -- 4th destroyers from Malta intercepted and sank, with her escorting destroyer, a large merchant ship laden with explosives and motor transport bound for TUNIS; on the same night naval aircraft repeated the success by torpedoing and setting on fire another ship of about 1000 tons. It was the last serious effort by the enemy to reinforce his army in TUNISIA by sea.

On May 8th, the day after the fall of TUNIS and BIZERTE, Admiral Cunningham sent the following order: "Sink, burn and destroy; let nothing pass". Our air forces were now operating sufficiently far forward to cover the Southwestern half of the Straits. Daylight patrols by destroyers were therefore instituted; to avoid confusion

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the air forces restricted their attacks within five miles of the TUNISIAN shore. By night the inshore area was patrolled by light coastal forces.

The total enemy shipping and craft which offered themselves as targets for the Navy seemed a poor reward for its skill and untiring vigilance, and the risks from mines which it had to accept; the sum total was two merchant ships, three small tramp steamers, a transport barge, a small fishing vessel, and numerous rowboats and rubber dinghies, from all of which 704 prisoners were picked up. "RETRIIBUTION", in fact, developed into a situation where only isolated small parties of stragglers sought safety by sea, to find that the sea was not theirs. The Italian Fleet had preferred to remain in the sheltered waters of SPEZIA and TARANTO.

Though the Navy was thus robbed of an action for which it had long waited, its disappointment was the measure of its triumph. Because the Axis High Command dared not join issue by sea, at a time when its forces on land were in a desperate situation, it was compelled to sacrifice 200,000 men, who were taken prisoner during the final stages, besides immense quantities of stores and equipment. Thus was proved the folly of flouting the age-long strategic axiom that to commit large ground forces across a sea, without assured and continuing control of that sea, is to court disaster. In narrow waters Air Power may exercise that control; when Air Power is countered and overcome, Sea Power resumes its traditional role.

After six months of varying fortune, AFRICA had been cleared of all Axis Forces; from bases in TUNISIA our Air Forces were pounding the airfields and ports of SOUTHERN EUROPE; and the ports of NORTH AFRICA were ready to receive the ships, equipment and men, who, two months later, were to invade enemy soil. On May 17th the first through convoy passed the STRAITS of GIBRALTAR and reached ALEXANDRIA nine days later; the first unopposed convoy since 1940 reached MALTA on May 24th.

I had originally hoped to achieve these results nearly six months earlier than this, by excluding the Axis entirely from TUNISIA and by trapping Rommel in LIBYA; our initial failure had the unforeseen effect of enhancing the magnitude of our ultimate success, because it tempted the Axis into making what proved to be an excessive investment in the TUNISIAN Bridgehead. We destroyed not merely the remnants of Rommel's original Afrika Korps, but a total Axis army of more than 320,000 men, dead, wounded, or prisoners, and we captured all their equipment. In the event, the American, British, and French forces that had been engaged had become battle-hardened, had tested their ability to fight together as comrades-in-arms, and had won in the end a confidence that was inspired by overwhelming victory.

THE CAMPAIGN IN RETROSPECT

The accomplishments of this campaign are sufficiently evident to make comment unnecessary. Our mistakes, some of which were serious, may be less apparent at this moment, and, in the interest of future operations, they should be subjected to dispassionate analysis.

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In the first place, our advance estimate of the political temper and attitude in North Africa was incorrect, at least so far as the European elements were concerned. Both the Combined Chiefs of Staff and my own Headquarters, as well as higher governmental circles, were of the conviction that if General Giraud should enter North Africa with the Expedition and with the support of the Allied Commander-in-Chief, there would quickly flame up a positive and favorable sentiment in support of the war. That this was a misapprehension was quickly demonstrated when General Giraud's first broadcast in North Africa was not only completely ignored but he himself, in ALGIERS, was compelled to take measures to ensure the safety of his own person. More serious than this was the complete apathy displayed by the population--which apathy was very real in spite of vociferous receptions given to American troops by individual groups in one or two important cities. When we arrived North Africa had been untouched by the ravages of war, although it was resentful of the high-handed actions of the German and Italian Armistice Commissions. The later attitude in ALGIERS, for example, was merely that our entry brought their city under the bombs of the Axis. The effort to readjust, on the spot, our ideas and purposes in this regard, met with a relatively satisfactory degree of practical success even at the cost of a serious misunderstanding in our home populations as to our purposes, both immediate and ultimate.

It must be remembered that initially we were governed by one consideration of transcendent importance--the extreme necessity for a prompt capture of TUNIS. Every arrangement made with the French--political, economic and military--was definitely understood by them and by us to be in the nature of a stop-gap, intended to apply only until French North Africa was cleared of the enemy. Had the great Tunisian gamble met with prompt success, later administration changes could have been more quickly effected, and there would not have ensued the long dreary winter months of intermittent tactical inactivity, during which writers throughout the United States had very little in which to interest themselves in our operation except so far as its political aspects were concerned.

I believe now that it would have been better had we not established initially a temporary political censorship in North Africa. However, my reason for so doing was a simple one, and appeared sound at the time my decision was made. We had come into North Africa without Fighting French representation because we had been assured that the inclusion of any Fighting French in the Expedition would certainly inspire an immediate civil war. We were informed that this would be most violent among the Armed Forces, which were, to us, the most important element in the early days. This particular conclusion was unquestionably correct. There is no doubt that the French Forces then in North Africa, poisoned as they were by two solid years of the bitterest kind of Axis propaganda, and almost unaware of what was going on in the United Nations were most hostile to General DeGaulle. The purpose of the censorship was to prevent the French in North Africa from giving public vent to their feelings in this regard, because the earnest hope of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and of myself from the very inception of planning was to bring about as speedily as possible a rapprochement between the Fighting French and such other French Forces as might come under the influence of the United Nations. Immediately following our landing certain radio stations under the control of the Fighting French maintained a high tempo of violent criticism directed against the whole North African venture, the BRASSAVILLE radio being particularly harsh. We were merely trying to avoid the creation of a situation that would make reconciliation impossible.

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Another reason for the imposition of this censorship was the fact that we were making great efforts to bring into the United Nations camp French West Africa, including DAKAR, as well as other portions of Africa which still acknowledged the sovereignty of Vichy. Then, of course, we thought we still had a chance to bring the French Fleet across the Mediterranean to North Africa through the influence of DARLAN.

The imposition of political censorship was against my convictions in the general handling of the press and was a violation of the policies I have consistently followed since June, 1942, when I was first assigned to a Theater Command. I think it is impossible yet to say that that action was wholly a mistake but it seems most likely that had the purposes and intent of the Allied leaders been properly presented up the North African theater there would have been less resentment at home. It is a curious fact that two weeks after political censorship was completely lifted I received a very violent criticism from the United States press upon the existence of this censorship. The truth is that press representatives in North Africa were apparently no longer interested. In any event, I believe that this incident clearly demonstrates the dangers that lie in the rigid imposition of censorship. I am sure that the very least censorship that is possible without violating military security, and without exposing to the enemy the purposes of the Forces on the spot, is in general the wise course to follow.

I am now convinced that regardless of consequences, I should have compelled an earlier acceptance by the French of the principle of Allied command on the fighting front, and insisted on their placing their divisions directly under the British commander. From the middle of November to late January there was fighting going on along a long line; all our Forces were dependent upon one single line of communications, and the only coordination was such as could be achieved through cooperation on the spot through the personal influence of the Allied Commander-in-Chief whose multitudinous duties did not and could not permit him to devote his whole attention to the battle line. The French reverses of about January 19 convinced me that action was immediately necessary, and I arbitrarily placed General Anderson in command of the whole battle line; but his Headquarters and signal communications had already been so established as practically to confine his effective control to the Northern part of the sector. Constantly recurring crises of lesser or greater importance prevented him from rearranging his Command system and unquestionable contributed to the error, in the SBEITLA - KASSERINE battle, of committing a United States Armored Division to action in dribblets.

Another error, but one that could become apparent only after the event, was the inclusion in the original attacking Force, particularly in the ALGIERS contingent, of too great a proportion of troops equipped merely to seize and hold a harbor and base. It would have been better to have diminished these in favor of a greater mobile striking force. Actually the resistance in ALGIERS was very slight and, could we have counted on this in advance, there could well have been included in that Expedition the additional vehicles that would have permitted us to strengthen materially our initial attack in TUNISIA. Even another regimental combat team might have been decisive in the very early days.

I still believe that final success should not obscure the fact that one great failure of the campaign, from our viewpoint, was the failure to gain TUNIS by the middle of December. This was not a mistake; it merely became an impossibility. I am quite well aware of the compensations

resulting from the longer campaign, particularly those involving the greater final bag of prisoners, more serious blows to Axis prestige, and the fighting experience gained by a number of raw British and American Divisions. However, the time lost meant a great deal. If we had gained TUNISIA at the first thrust Rommel would have been quickly eliminated and we would have had at least three additional months to plan and prepare for further operations. Under these circumstances there is every reason to believe that we could have eventually attacked the Italian mainland in the early summer instead of in the early fall, and I am convinced that if our Forces, supported by the tremendous Air units we had then built up, could have begun the Italian campaign in May, we would have been firmly established in the Po Valley before the incidence of winter weather. It was because of my deep-seated convictions as to the importance of time in the early Mediterranean campaign--which would inevitably be reflected later in any other operations against the "Fortress of Europe"--that led me during the months of November and December, 1942, to send to the Commanding General, First Army, every bit of tactical power that could be found in North Africa. I sent it to him by large and small unit, almost by individual. Although recognizing the risk involved, I stripped the Forces in MOROCCO of men and equipment, and did everything I could conceive to afford him opportunity to make a decisive push into northern TUNISIA before the end of the year. For a number of reasons, all clearly explained in this report, we failed.

Another error that should be mentioned was the initial decision not to unify our Air Forces under a single Command. This idea was an original part of the TORCH organizational plan, but I accepted representations made to me, principally by airmen in whom I had the greatest confidence, that the projected use of the American and British Air Forces involved such a wide geographical dispersion that a unified Command would be impracticable. It will be remembered that following upon the initial landings it was the intent to hurl British Forces, both land and air, into TUNISIA, while the American contingent was expected to find its primary use in solidifying the line of communications through GIBRALTAR and to the East.

As the battle flamed up in TUNISIA, the American Air Forces were transported rapidly to the eastward and the British Air Commander was given operational charge of the whole Force. This did not work. While it is true that our Air Forces had to operate under appalling physical handicaps, it is equally true that our failure to provide for and achieve complete coordination in the early days made us even less effective in the air than we need have been.

On the credit side of the ledger I do not need to recite the long list of material advantages that we finally achieved with the culmination of the campaign in the middle of May. But in the North African Theater, even under the stresses imposed by alternate partial victory and stinging tactical defeat, there was achieved among the principal officers of the whole Expedition a coordination of purpose and a constant objectivity of viewpoint that gradually permeated to lower ranks and clearly established the fact that British and American Forces of all arms could unite and work together effectively. In achieving this result no individual was more responsible than my Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Walter B. Smith.

The 18th Army Group under General Alexander began to function on February 20. Every day there was a noticeable advance in the coordination of tactical activity, in the growth of mutual understanding, and in the readiness of British and Americans alike to accept orders from military superiors without regard to nationality. Even more encouraging was the steady growth in the readiness of the officers of each Service

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to take responsibility on their own shoulders, and to resist the temptation to blame the other nationality for reverses, or to claim for their own complete credit for every victory.

In the Air Forces the amalgamation of the two nationalities was virtually complete. While a certain segregation is almost always necessary in order to keep logistic and administrative lines as simple as possible, yet complete segregation by nationality would have denied Air Chief Marshal Tedder the opportunity to combine his Forces so as to take best advantage of the varying characteristics of the combined equipment. In response to these considerations the Force was divided primarily into a tactical element, a strategic element, a coastal defense element, and a maintenance and training element. In each of these both nations served side by side, under high Headquarters made up of officers of both nationalities. The results achieved by the Air Force amply justified the contention that Air Chief Marshal Tedder and his principal American Assistant, General Spaatz, accomplished a practical perfection in the coordination employment of the Air Forces of the two nations.

On the Naval side similar considerations applied. Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham and his principal American Assistant, Vice Admiral Hewitt, worked from the very beginning in the closest harmony and with mutual understanding of each other's problems.

In the logistic field, General Gale of the British Services and Brigadier General Everett S. Hughes of the American Army was similarly successful.

After we landed in Africa there was never an instance where my subordinate commanders or my own staff presented to me a problem in which there was brought forward as a consideration a British versus an American viewpoint. In fact, I recall one operation for which the British Ground Commander had little enthusiasm, but upon my decision that the operation would be mounted he promptly placed at my disposal a British Division to undertake the assault.

By far the most encouraging aspect of this remarkable and almost unique experience is the fact that great numbers of American and British officers--who must be assumed to be typical of their ranks and services throughout our entire fighting Forces--were quickly able to see the wisdom and necessity of recognizing and obeying a single directing head, and of habitually acting accordingly throughout the chain of Command. They realized that in such a venture the greatest patriot is the man who is most ready to meet his partner with consideration and respect, and to reach an objective solution to every problem without concerning himself with matters that he conceives to be in national self-interest.

(Signed) DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

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